

HUGE UNREAL PLAYGUIDE *begins this issue*

THE AUSTRALIAN  
PC ENTERTAINMENT MAGAZINE

# PC PowerPlay

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# Johnny Herbert's Grand Prix Championship 1998



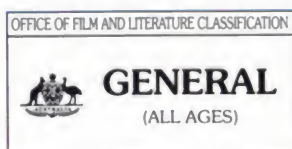
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Ben Mansil. Editor, PC PowerPlay



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All copyrights reserved by  
Next Publishing Pty Ltd  
ACN No 002 647 645  
Printed by Wilke Colour  
Film produced by Prestige Colour  
Distributed by NDD 02 9353 9911  
ISSN: PCPP 1326-5644

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What we're playing: Powerslide, Colin  
McRae Rally, MOO2, European Air War  
beta, Descent: Freespace, Johnny  
Herbert's Grand Prix beta,  
Commandos, Battlezone, TOCA, Final  
Fantasy VII, Age of Empires, Unreal,  
Civ2 Multiplayer, Spyhunter, Allundra,  
Ghost in the Shell  
A superb month of gaming! We don't  
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# Flight Sims: Inbound at last!



Where did all the flight sims go? Three years ago there were enough to keep us in whatever manner of cockpit we chose, whether it be commercial or combat. It was the only reliable constant in PC gaming. There would always be flight sims. Yes, life would always be good and the jet-fighter pilot fantasy would never die.

What the hell happened! For the last three years there was only DiD's EF2000 and ADF series, together with any Jane's EA sim (as long as it didn't have the letters "ATF" on the box) to keep our joysticks warm. While it's nice to have a new sim every year from DiD and Andy Hollis (the producer of all the worthy Jane's sims), some more variety would be nice. Nice?! Dammit! Try "essential"...

As with all the world's greatest problems, this one has an annoyingly plausible explanation. You see, during the 3-year drought many sim developers were not turning their attention to making C&C clones to go with the lemming-flow, but were instead beavering away on the next generation of flight sims. And they're almost ready, I'm deliriously happy to announce. Lots of them, and they all look very cool indeed.

This is great news. Many gamers today picked up their habit through flight sims. These are the original 3D combat games! The original "must upgrade PC..." games! The forefathers of immersive virtual world life-living! We can't let them die! To arms brothers and sisters! Well, to page 40 then. That's

where our flight sim roundup starts. Major Ian was the only man for this job. Armed with beta versions of most new sims, Ian test flew them all and has given us a comprehensive analysis of the mad fun we'll hopefully be having by Xmas. Good job, man.

So, good times ahead and above, gamers. There are a good dozen new sims coming, isn't that just fantastic? Half will be delayed due to the need for "play balancing", which is the new industry-standard excuse for "it's a complete mess, there's no hope it'll be out in time, no hope at all". One will be dropped completely due to "unforeseen technical difficulties", which actually means "we fired the producer", while the remaining few will turn out to be lame and boring. Oddly, of this lot Falcon 4.0 actually looks most likely to be released this year. Amazing. The Latest Game in the World is back on schedule. I hope it's good...

**Ben Mansill**  
Editor





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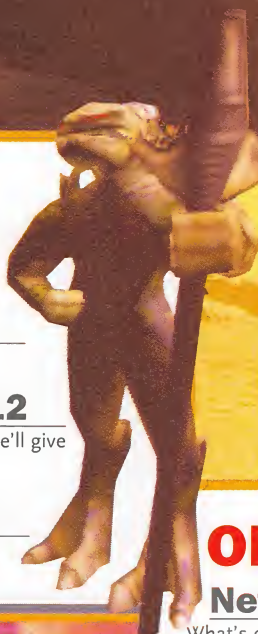
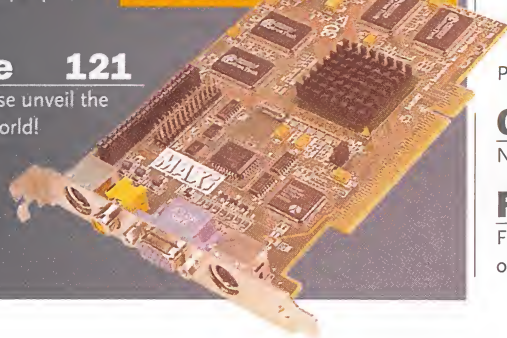
Australia's reigning tech-god answers your cries for help.

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New graphics cards and chips, plus behind the Unreal magic.

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The kings of the 3D universe unveil the fastest 2D chipset in the world! Amazing.



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# CD GUIDE

Your entertainment for the month. Game hard.

## Starting the PC PowerPlay CD

Welcome to the PC PowerPlay CD. Insert the CD into the CDROM drive and click on the RUNME file to start.

### The Old and the New menus

When the interface appears you have two menu options - the Old Menu or the New one. Selecting the Old Menu interface takes you to the screen you have already become accustomed to. Use this if you happen to come across any problems with the new interface. However, we are confident that you won't need it, as the new interface is rock solid and even easier to use.

Selecting the NEW interface menu is the option you REALLY want to choose. Just click on the option you want, whether it's Games, Utilities or Patches and another menu will appear. Browse through the menu

options and click on the program you want to install. It's pretty straightforward so you shouldn't have any problems.

**cdtech@powerplay.next.com.au**

Faulty CDs will be replaced free of charge. Send it, together with a description of the error, to:

**PC PowerPlay**

**CD Returns**

**Reply Paid 634**

**78 Renwick St**

**Redfern**

**NSW 2016 (No postage required)**

## The Games



## STARCRRAFT

Genre: Strategy

Published by: Blizzard

Entertainment

Location On CD: \GAMES\STAR-CFT\SCDEMO.EXE

It is a time of crisis. Three of the most powerful forces in the universe head on a collision course in a galaxy held at the brink of destruction. The time for war has come. As the military leader for your species, you must gather the resources you need to train and expand your military and lead them to victory.



### Controls

All controls are via the mouse. Press F1 during the game for online game instructions.

## 3D ULTRA MINI GOLF DELUXE

Published by: Sierra On-Line

Location On CD:

\GAMES\3DGOLF\MGDE-MO.EXE

Never have to fight crowds, weather or bad traffic again as Sierra On-Line lets you immerse yourself in a round of mini-golf action.

### Instructions

To putt the ball, first line up the putter icon in the direction you want to putt the ball. A thin white direction indicator will show your aim (this fea-

ture can be toggled on and off in the Options Menu). Click and hold the left mouse button to start the backswing. Release the mouse button to discontinue the backswing and stroke the ball. The longer you hold the left mouse button, the harder the putt and the farther the ball will go. All putts are straight and only the terrain of the hole and any obstacles affect the direction of the putt. To cancel simply hold the left mouse button down until the putter returns to its base position.







## GRIM FANDANGO

**Genre:** Adventure

**Published by:** Lucas Arts

**Location On CD:** \GAMES\GRIM\GRIM.EXE

Employed by the Department of Death, Manny, a true working stiff, is stuck in his own personal purgatory with the ultimate dead-end job. Your job is to help Manny pick up people in the Land of the Living, bring them to the Land of the Dead, and send them off on a four year journey across the underworld.

### Controls

**Move forward** Numpad-8

**Move backwards** Numpad-2

**Turn right** Numpad-6

**Turn left** Numpad-4

**Run** Shift-Numpad-8

**Examine item** Numpad-5 or E

**Inventory** Numpad-Ins or I

**Scroll through inventory** Numpad-4 & 6

**Put item in hand** Enter or Numpad-Enter

**Pick up item** Numpad+= or P

**Return item to inventory** Numpad+= or P

**Use item/ Talk to character** Enter, Numpad-Enter or U

**Look at next nearby item** Numpad Delete

**Pause** Pause



## ANCIENT CONQUEST

**Genre:** Strategy

**Publisher:** Megamedia

**Location On CD:**

\GAMES\ANCIENT\AC.EXE

Ancient Conquest is set in the fictional days when heroes like Hercules and Perseus lived. Your role is to find the golden fleece, a magical artifact that brings fortune to its owner. Harpies, medusas, cyclopes, minotaurs and other formidable foes will try their best to stop you. However it's not all bad because you can enlist ancient heroes to help you on your quest.

### Controls

All controls are via the mouse. For game instructions read the game help file.

## GEX 2: Enter The Gecko

**Genre:** Arcade

**Published by:** Crystal Dynamix

**Location On CD:**

\GAMES\GEX\SETUP.EXE

That Gecko with an attitude is back for another adventure in TV Land. It seems Gex just can't stay away from the picture tube, and to make matters worse, he's been sucked into it and transported to an alternate universe. Gex this time round, is in full 3D and has to make his way through many adventures in order to save the world.

### Controls

Cursor Keys control Gex's directions.

**Space** = Zoom in

**Enter** = Jump



## BLACK DAHLIA

**Published by:** Interplay

**Genre:** Adventure

**Location On CD:** \GAMES\BLACKD\BD\_WIN.EXE

Inspired by Cleveland's grisly "Torso Killer" murders, and the unsolved murder of Elizabeth Short [nicknamed Black Dahlia] comes this puzzle based adventure from Interplay. As intelligence agent Jim Pearson, your role is to investigate and solve the murder which will take you on a quest across America as well as war torn Europe.

### Controls

All controls are via the mouse. For game instructions, read the game help file.

## LEISURE SUIT LARRY CASINO

**Genre:** Cards

**Published by:** Sierra

**Location On CD:**

\GAMES\LSL\LSLDEMO1.EXE

Computer game icon Leisure Suit Larry has been named manager of his very own Vegas-style gaming resort. All arm-chair gamblers can gamble for fun over the internet, or challenge computerized opponents from previous Leisure Suit

Larry adventure games. Join him in the hot-tub for a game of blackjack.

### Controls

All controls are via the mouse. For game instructions consult the help file that comes with the game.





## MICRO-MACHINES 3

**Genre:** Racing

**Published by:** Codemasters

**Location On CD:**

**\GAMES\MM3\SETUP.EXE**

Climb into a miniature vehicle and drive around kitchen tables, sandcastles, or even a pool table while dodging milk puddles, toast, pens and other obstacles. Don't let their size fool you though, for these cars/tanks/boats are fast. Courses come complete with power-ups that allow you to wreak havoc with your opponents. Best thing of all, the game lets 8 players compete simultaneously.

**Controls**

**Left Cursor** = turn left

**Right Cursor** = turn right

**Up Cursor** = accelerate

**Down Cursor** = brake/reverse

## MICROSOFT GOLF 98

**Genre:** Sport

**Published by:** Microsoft

**Location On CD:**

**\GAMES\GOLF\MSGOLF98.EXE**

Microsoft Golf 1998 Edition is an easy to use, true-to-life golf game available for the PC. Fluid and realistic game graphics, beautifully rendered courses, and accurate ball physics recreate the feel of a real round of golf. Go a few rounds against the computer or link up via the internet for your own brand of Skins tournament.

This Trial Version gives you 3 holes of play at the stunning Bay Harbour Golf Club on the shores of Lake Michigan. It also offers expanded choices for customizing your game; scoring and betting options; and four swing types.

**Controls**

Here are the swing descriptions: **2-click Swing:** For your backswing, click and hold your mouse button on the Swing Arc, release the button to set power, and click a second time to hit the ball.

**3-click Swing:** Click your mouse button three times on the Swing Arc: once to start the backswing, again to set the power, and a third time to hit the ball.

**Natural Swing:** With your pointer on the Swing Meter, hold down the mouse button, and slide the mouse straight in one direction to make your backswing, then straight back to make your down-



## WARLORDS 3

**Genre:** Strategy

**Published by:** Red Orb

**Location On CD:** **\GAMES\ DARKDEMO\SETUP.EXE**

Become a character in the Warlords world and explore a city in your quest to join the ranks of the Sirian Knights! Open the door to step into this dark fantasy world. Warlords III: Darklords Rising (Darklords) was developed in response to the thousands of requests to expand the gaming system in Reign of Heroes. More than just new campaigns, maps and units, Darklords has a greatly enhanced AI computer player, customizable computer AI with human handicapping system, more detailed game setup and a full game editor. This demo includes a fully playable 4 player map. All options are enabled and there are no time or turn limits in the demo. The demo also includes free game matching on both Red Orb Zone and Mplayer.

**Controls**

All controls are via the mouse. The demo comes with an online tutorial.

swing and hit the ball.

**Sim Swing:** This is the game's simulation swing. To execute it, double-click the Swing button on the game toolbar.

## SANITARIUM

**Genre:** Adventure

**Published by:** ASC Games

**Location On CD:**

**\GAMES\SANITAR\SETUP.EXE**

Vague memories assault you, a hurried phone call, a message of utmost importance, a car losing control... Your head throbs. In the background, you hear people screaming, sobbing and laughing maniacally. Is it a nightmare? Are you insane? Is it reality? Maybe this is death. It's up to you to put the pieces together.

**Controls**

Most movements are done via cursor keys. For game instructions consult the help file that comes with the game.

## HOUSE OF THE DEAD

**Genre:** Arcade

**Published by:** Sega

**Location On CD:**

**\GAMES\HOTD\HOTD.EXE**

Secret Government research personnel are missing. A team of Special Ops personnel is dispatched to investigate - what they find are brain-sucking zombies running wild in an experiment gone awry. You must rescue the staff and fend off hordes of undead and other genetic mutations. But you better shoot fast or they'll make you one of them!

**Controls**

Use mouse to line up crosshair and buttons to shoot and reload.

## PATCHES

As usual the game patches are located in the \PATCHES folder on the CD. This month's patches include Cyberstorm, Descent Freespace, Quake 2 upgrade, Jedi Knight and a few for Total Annihilation. To install a patch simply copy the appropriate file[s] to where the game resides and launch. Check the information in the file about more installation instructions.





# Utilities

## ADOBE ACROBAT

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\ACT\AR32E301.EXE  
 Allows anyone to view, navigate and print documents in the Adobe Portable Document Format [PDF files].

## ANIMATE SCREENS

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\SCREEN\ASCRSTP.EXE  
 Create Windows screen savers and stand-alone presentations that you can give to your friends, employees, customers and colleagues.

## CRYSTAL 3D IMPACT PRO

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\CRYSTAL\C3DIP122.EXE  
 Easy to use 3D animation software. Within minutes, you can add the impact of high-quality 3D pictures, titles, objects, buttons and logos to your web pages, videos, and presentations.

## FIREHAND EMBER

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\EMBER\EMBERSET.EXE  
 Excellent visual file manager for images. Ember has a variety of file management functions and can handle all types of graphic files.

## FONT FX

**Location On CD:** \UTILS\FONT-FX\FONTFX20.EXE  
 3D text and animation program. Font F\X transforms any TrueType font into a compelling 3D graphic image, enhancing all forms of visual communications from Web pages to reports and presentations.

## GIF ANIMATOR

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\GIF\GA20TU.EXE  
 Ulead GIF Animator is a very easy to use tool for designing, producing and optimizing GIF animations. Running under Windows 95 and NT, Ulead GIF Animator lets you create compact animations with drag-and-drop simplicity.

## HYPERSNAP DX PRO

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\HYPER\HYSNAPP.EXE  
 HyperSnap-DX brings professional quality screen captures to your fingertips. It was designed for ease of use, with powerful and useful features to aid the professional as well as the occasional user.

## KAI'S POWER TOOLS

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\SCREEN\ASCRSTP.EXE  
 Create stunning texture backgrounds, gradients with hundreds of colours, 3D text effects, Web buttons and effects like Page Curl with "the world's coolest filter set."

## MACRO MAGIC

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\MM\MMAGIC.EXE  
 Macro Magic helps you save time by assigning repetitive tasks to your computer.

## VIRTUAL TURNTABLES

**Location On CD:**  
 \UTILS\VT\VT100.EXE  
 Virtual Turntables is the ONLY program available that allows

you to play and mix MP3s! With nothing more than your home computer and a hard drive full of MP3s, you'll be creating professional sounding mixes in no time!

## INTERNET

### 1 COOL TOOL

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\1COOL\1COOLSET.EXE  
 Helps create cool looking Java applets without any prior html or Java programming knowledge.

### CONNECT PAL

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\CP\SETUP.EXE  
 Helps you automate your connection to the Internet as well as track how much time you stay online.

### COVER YOUR TRACKS

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\CYT3\CYT.EXE  
 Removes all history and audit trails from Netscape, great if you share your computer and you don't want anyone to see what you get up to.

### EUDORA MAIL

**Location On CD:** \INET\EUDORA\EPDEMO.EXE  
 Excellent email package. This is the latest version.

### GOZILLA

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\GOZILLA\GOZILLA.EXE  
 Organise your downloads. Many

features including resume downloads, scheduling and autodisconnect.

### IFOX 98

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\IFOX\IFOX98.EXE  
 Another fine download managing tool. Not as pretty as Gozilla but just as powerful.

### MICROSOFT CHAT

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\CHAT\MSCHAT.EXE  
 Microsoft Chat enables you to communicate globally through an easy to use interface.

### TANARUS

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\TANARUS\TANARUS.EXE  
 One of the best multiplayer internet game around. You ride around in a tank and basically blow up anything that gets in your way.

### URL MANAGER

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\URL\SETUP.EXE  
 This small and useful utility gives you quick access to your bookmarks and URLs.

### WEBFERET

**Location On CD:**  
 \INET\WEBFERET\WEBFET.EXE  
 Looking for something on the internet? Try this alternative method whereby you enter your keyword and the program goes out and searches through all the search engines. The "hits" are then displayed line by line and you just need to click on a link to be transported to that webpage.

# HOT!

## Gamers Hardware Web Site

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# CD EXTRA

The Super-Special PowerPlay 2nd CD of Gaming Power

## The full list of gaming wonderment:

- Age of Empires
  - Blood
- Carmageddon
- Comanche Gold
- Curse of Monkey Island
  - Descent
  - Diablo
  - DOOM 95
- Duke Nukem 3D
  - Forsaken
  - Hexen II
  - I-WAR
- Jedi Knight: Dark Forces 2
  - Links98
- Mech Warrior 2 Mercenaries
  - Myth
- Need For Speed 2
  - Neverhood
  - Outlaws
  - Quake
  - Quake 2
  - Red Alert
- Redneck Rampage
  - Rise of the Triad
    - Settlers 2
    - Tomb Raider
    - Tomb Raider 2
- Total Annihilation
  - Virtual Pool
  - Virtual Pool 2
- Warcraft: Orcs and Humans
  - Warcraft 2
  - Wolfenstein 3D
  - Worms 2
- X-Wing vs Tie Fighter
- Zork Grand Inquisitor

**N**ot content with running up the regulation PC Game Mag "Top 50", we instead decided to indulge ourselves a little and go with our personal favourites. Now, as well as gaining an incredibly valuable insight into the taste, style and judgement of the team, you can re-live the gaming joy that we ourselves got sucked into. Here's some bits about some of the best games on this CD.

## Tomb Raider

Snide criticism has been regularly directed Lara's way too often of late, usually you suspect simply because she's a girl. Generally it's not the ads that are sexist, but the reaction they draw. All of which means we're in danger of forgetting just how great a game Tomb Raider remains even now. Rarely has any game captured such a sense of awe and wonder as you explore the ancient ruins, caves and lost cities of this pioneering 3D experience.

## Doom

Although not exactly the first, Doom defined the first-person 3D shoot 'em up simply by being exponentially superior to every game that had come before it. Doom was probably the first game to make you feel genuine fear. It also practically invented (well, popularised at least) the pastime of wandering around 3D mazes with a shotgun to shoot your mates. Could very well lay claim to being the most important and influential game in history.

## Duke Nukem 3D

Technically not true 3D, but then I guess Duke Nukem 2-and-a-half-D never really rolled off the tongue, did it? Yet, of course, argument over the relative abilities of Duke's build engine are rendered irrelevant when faced with the supreme confidence of this game and its eponymous hero. Aliens have kidnapped every "babe" on earth, leaving Duke with no choice but to



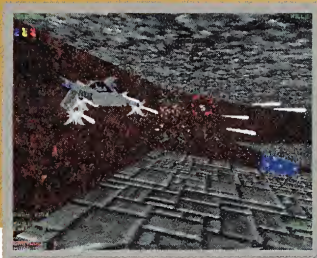
gurn and burn his way through loads of immaculately-realised locations, both on and off the planet, armed merely with a pair of Docs and some shades. - oh, and the undisputed greatest collection of weapons ever assembled in the name of wholesome family fun.

## Quake 1&2

Not content with inventing the damn genre in the first place (with Wolfenstein 3D and Doom), id software also created its crowning achievement. Quake made the step into true 3D polygon graphics and the







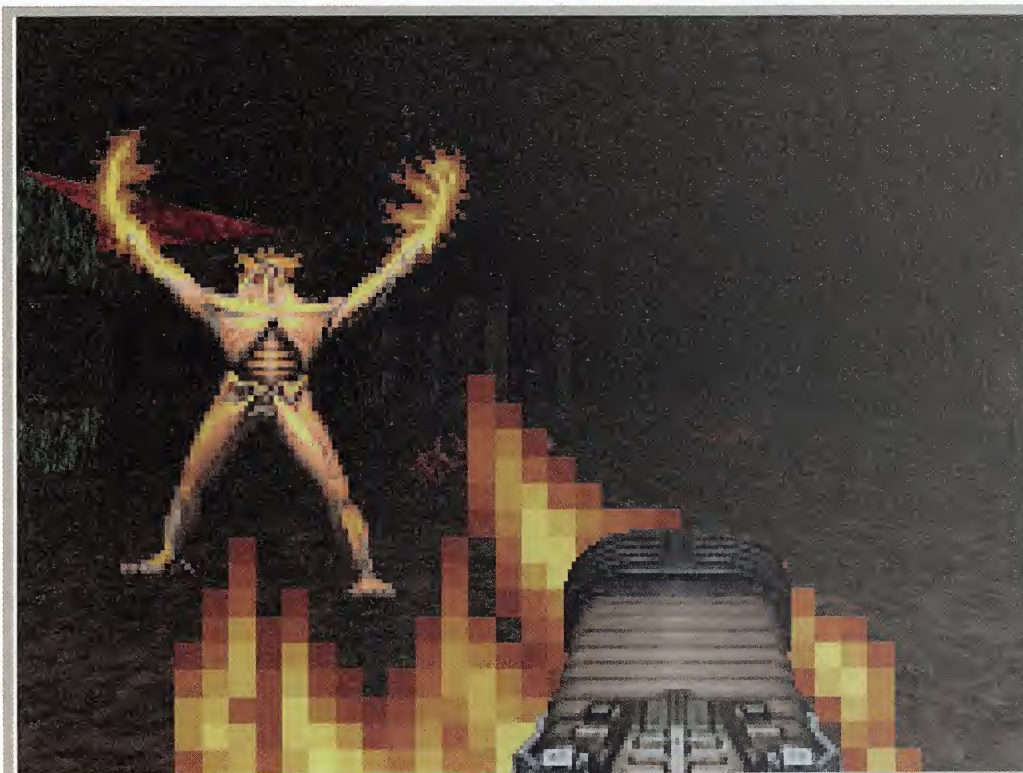
whole world collectively shook its head in disbelief. Yes, as a solo experience Quake offered only shortlived (albeit nightmarishly, nerve-shreddingly, bowel-evacuatingly scary) enjoyment, but Deathmatch Quake (or Team Fortress Quake) is, as they say, The Shit.

## Warcraft 1&2

For many people, Warcraft was the game upon which they cut their real-time strategy teeth. Dune 2 may have forged the genre as we know it today, but it was through Blizzard's medieval classic that it initially began to gain popularity. Although dated, it's joyously simple to play and, according to some, packs more charisma into its sturdy battleaxe than a million Total Annihilations could ever manage.

## Descent

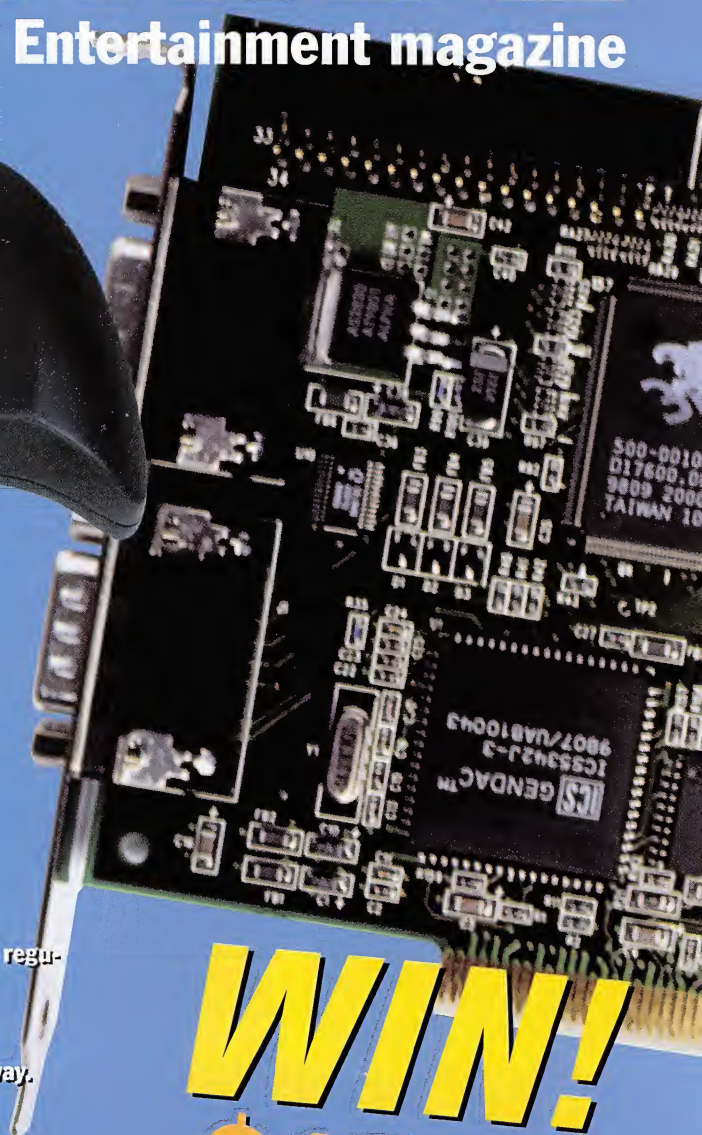
Back when extensive shareware previews were the norm rather than the exception they are today, the Descent demo still provided astounding value for (no) money. Treated to seven monstrous levels full of gripping, intense sci-fi action and frequently spectacular 3D pyrotechnics, many gamers were so satisfied by this demo that they neglected to buy the full game. Interplay's rare generosity ought to be applauded.





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But you could be hated even more by your friends and fellow subscribers if you subscribe this month, because we've got three packs of Ubisoft goodies to give away to three new subscribers, or renewers.

## VOODOO 2, JUST FOR YOU

You should know by now how much your gaming life improves with a Voodoo 2 under the bonnet. The problem is that they're pretty bloody expensive - but not if you win one. So, thanks to the lovely people from Ubisoft (and we do mean lovely) we've got three gaming packs to give away, worth over \$500 each!

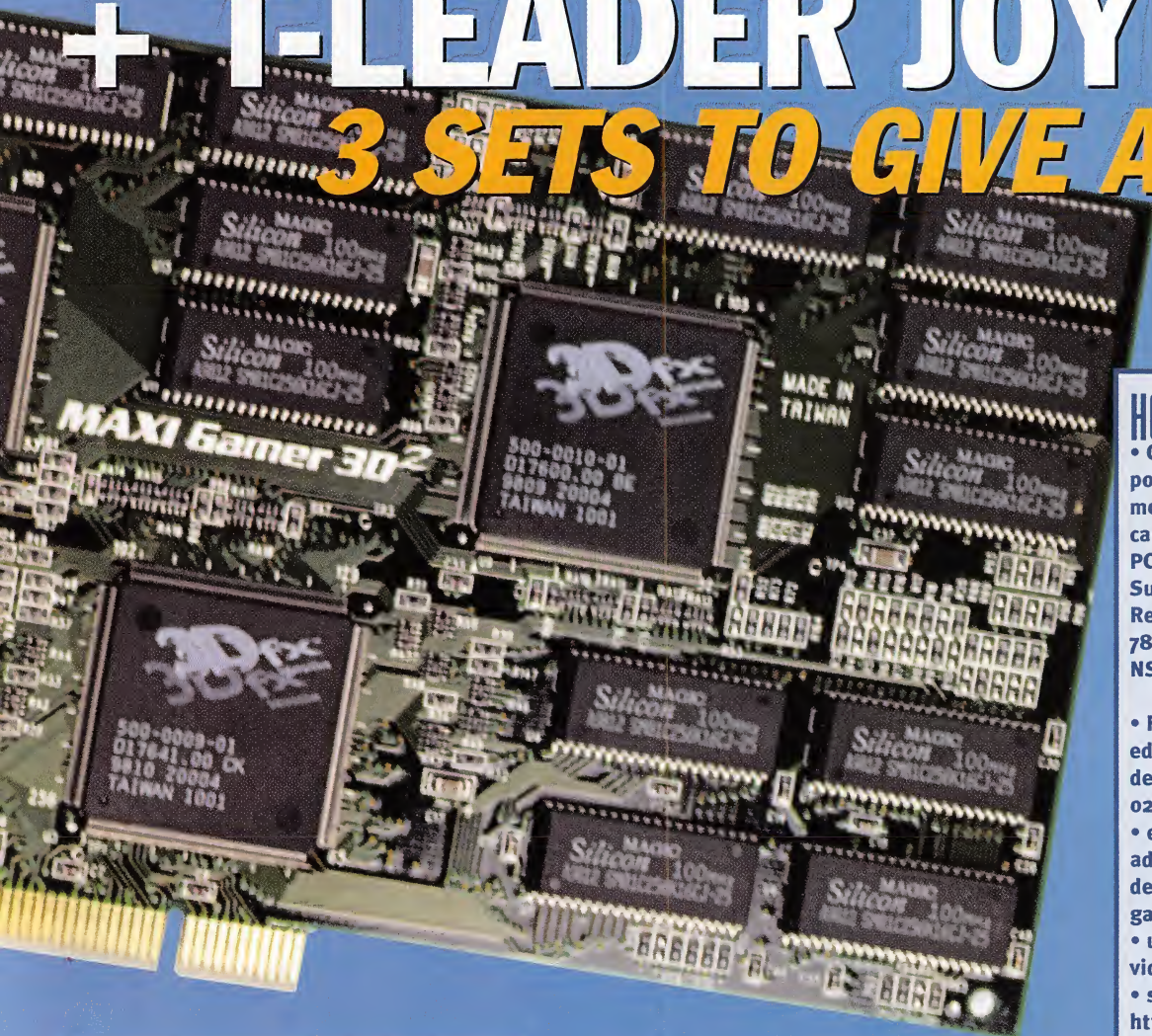
Each winner will receive a **Guillemot Maxi Gamer Voodoo 2 12MB 3D accelerator card**, along with one of the wonderful Nintendo style **T-Leader joypads** also from **Guillemot**. Not bad, eh? Not only will you get PCPP faster, cheaper, and easier, but once you see Unreal running smoothly at 800 x 600 your life will be complete. And even if you don't win, you still get Australia's best games mag for 12 months straight without ever having to leave the house - there just isn't any downside to the deal.

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**ISSUE #26 WINNER**  
(Sony 400PS Trinitron)

**S. Beaney**  
Baulkham Hills NSW



## SIDELINES

**Electronic Arts continues raids**

Last month we brought you news of EA's raid on Singaporean pirates, which resulted in thousands of copies of pirated EA games being taken off the market. The anti-piracy actions have continued, this time in Turkey, netting an estimated US\$300,000 worth of illegal products. In tandem with Turkish customs authorities, EA tracked an operation that was shipping pirated products into Turkey from Malaysia, and raided stores selling the software, ending up with around 800 CDs seized. "These raids are part of our continuing efforts to combat piracy in key new markets" said EA's export sales manager Peter Laughton.

**Rise of the Rednecks**

We are blessed with cable TV in Australia now, but we're still yet to see the television shows that cable is perfectly suited to - like *Soldiers of Fortune, Inc.* Essentially, it's a low budget affair with fourth rate actors (including the requisite bimbo, and Dennis Rodman) that attempts to recreate situations that mercenaries would take part in, with the opportunity for viewers to join a web discussion on whether a knife would have been the best way to 'remove' the guard rather than a shotgun shell to the head, and so on. The, er, good news is that Mplayer is holding a Quake 2 tournament with maps based on the series. There's a very fine line between gratuitous violence and fantasy violence in computer games, and it's a line that's becoming very opaque of late. But as long as it's all for a good cause, like defending truth, justice, and vengeance the American way, that's fine with us. Yeehah!

**Railroad Tycoon 2. Any ideas?**

It's too late now, but Pop Top Software, developers of RT2 held a contest a short while ago called the "Doh! Why Didn't I think of that?" comp. It wasn't a case of the developers not having any ideas as to what to do for the sequel to Sid Meier's classic game, but more of a case where they were accepting input from the fans themselves. It's a gesture that's not very common nowadays, with multimillion dollar productions, highly trained professional staff, and an increasingly litigious atmosphere in the arena of intellectual property, but an excellent way to ensure that the gaming community's needs and wants are at least being heard, and possibly even implemented. A large serving of kudos to Pop Top then, for a very commendable attitude.

**GT cancel Youngblood**

Another to add to the ever growing basket of vaguely high profile games to kick the bucket, GT Interactive's *Youngblood* game, based on the Rob Leifeld comic of the same name, has been cancelled. It was to have been an action/role playing game, with around 11 multi-level missions, as well as multiplayer in death-match, co-op, and team modes. A spokesperson from GT said that the product was cancelled because it wasn't living up to the standards that had been set, and the company did-

# BATTLECRUISER 3000AD LIVES AGAIN!

It's been almost ten years since the initial inception of *BattleCruiser*, but we're finally getting towards a fully working version that creator and mastermind Derek Smart is happy with. You might remember the scandal that erupted when Gametek released the original version to make the Christmas rush, leaving Mr Smart very unhappy indeed. A court case ensued, with Derek eventually gaining back the rights to his game, and he's been hard at work on it (along with his staff) ever since.

For starters, the latest patch has been made available at [www.bc3000ad.com/downloads/bc3k107d.zip](http://www.bc3000ad.com/downloads/bc3k107d.zip) - though this will not work with the free version (which was carried on our September cover CD). It will only work for those that have purchased the game, and you will need to have upgraded to version 1.07C already.

Also, rather than have Derek do it all himself, he's managed to find a publisher he can trust, though at press time he hadn't announced who it was exactly.

**Battlecruiser 3000AD - the saga continues, this time on a more positive note**



On top of this, the final version for BC3K, v2.0 'The Developer's Edition', will be released late this year. It will feature a Win95/98 installer, 2 campaign scenarios with a total of 50 missions, a printed tutorial - and a full featured mission builder to boot. Owners will be able to download this version as a patch, though it won't come complete with the mission builder, and there will only be 25 missions available.

To top it all off, Derek has also announced that a sequel is in the works - *BattleCruiser 3020AD 'Redemption'*. He's a trifle reticent about announcing details of the project just yet, but we're promised 45 new features, including various forms of multiplayer action, with TCP/IP, IPX, serial, and modem support. It will be released 'when it's ready', and we're guessing that he really means it, too.

## WARCRAFT 2 RE-RELEASED WITH BATTLE.NET SUPPORT



Conquer. As with C&C, the popularity of what is still even now a great game has seen them continue to release expansion packs, though until now there has been no support for War2 on Blizzard's Battle.net server. Though Warcraft

There's a review elsewhere in these pages that castigates Microprose for waiting two years before releasing *Civ2* Multiplayer edition, but they aren't alone. Well, sort of, at least. Blizzard started their journey to the top of the RTS developers ladder with *Warcraft 2*, which was released at around the same time as *Command and*

*War2* had multiplayer capabilities out of the box, this was only in the form of IPX and modem-to-modem, and the amount and popularity of online Warcraft leagues (using Kali) is testament to the large online following of the game.

The 'Platinum' pack will be updated for Windows 95/98, and will for the first time enable

War2 players to play over Battle.net (for free, as per usual). Also, the pack will contain both the original version of *Warcraft 2* and the expansion pack, 'The Dark Portal', as well as two complete new campaigns. The campaigns aren't recommended for novice players though, because they have been designed for very experienced War2 veterans that have been playing the game for a very long time. The Platinum version is an updated version, but there won't be any updated graphics or new units because Blizzard's main aim was to integrate Battle.net support. With an expected release date of around Christmas time, it is expected that a rebate will be offered to existing *Warcraft 2* owners, and the Platinum version will be compatible with the DOS version of War2 as well.



# GOVERNMENT vs. GAME DISTRIBUTORS

On 11 July 1998, around 1.00am early Sunday morning, the Senate passed the long awaited and controversial amendment bill to the Copyright Act which was further passed through the House of Representatives on Wednesday last week. This was hot on the heels of similar legislation passed by the New Zealand Parliament and reported to you in the previous edition of this magazine.

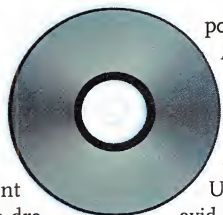
Two main aspects of the amending legislation which concern the games industry are:

The lifting of copyright control of owners or exclusive licensees to prohibit the importation of legitimate copies of sound recordings; and; the removal of import restrictions on brand-name goods seeking protection under the Copyright Act for the unauthorized importation of the copyright works contained on or in their packaging and labelling.

These changes, although not directly impacting on our industry in the short term, elude to a course of conduct by the current Federal Government that has the potential to dramatically reshape the way software publishers, distributors and retailers conduct business within Australia.

The removal of copyright protection will negate any prior protection afforded by the Australian Customs Services. This was not only an effective first line of protection for parallel imports, but was also an effective means of catching pirate products.

What is clear with the current line of thinking of the Federal Government is that in the event they are re-elected, the games industry is also on their target list. Labour conversely, have vowed to repeal the new legislation should they be elected to



power and both the Australian Democrats and the Greens have supported their stance.

Whatever the outcome, of concern is the US State Department's avid objection to the legislation and comments by its trade representative, Ms. Charlene Barshefsky that:

*"Australia has to sell its market as a location for business, as opposed to other countries selling their markets, but without copyright protection, US software companies would have second thoughts about operating in Australia."*

Agony or ecstasy? The bottom line is we will need to wait and see the impact of the latest legislative amendments and how far the Federal Government is willing to go to free up the Australian market place.

**Damien Pembroke**  
Principle of Pembroke Solicitors  
and Attorneys

## Media Vision execs charged by SEC

Back when PC's were just beginning to gain mainstream popularity, there were two hardware manufacturers vying for the position of 'standard sound device' status - Creative Pacific with their Sound Blaster series and Media Vision with their Pro Audio Spectrum (PAS) cards. Creative eventually won that battle, and Media Vision began a slow descent into bankruptcy. They were eventually reincarnated as Aureal Semiconductor (though Aureal is a completely different company), who are now making waves with their A3D positional 3D sound chips which are fast becoming the standard for 3D sound in games and other like applications. Interestingly enough, Aureal and Creative have locked horns (and lawyers) recently, with a dispute over their respective sound chips, so the old enmity still seems to be there.

However, it has been revealed recently that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has been investigating Media Vision (ex) executives, and has laid charges against the former chief

executive, former chief financial officer, former controller, and manufacturing director (amongst others), alleging that in 1994 there was a conspiracy to participate in insider trading, and to falsify documents to artificially inflate revenue.

The scheme allegedly overstated the company's profits by around \$US119 million, and it is claimed by the SEC that former CEO Paul Jain made \$US1.5 million, while former CFO Steven Allen made \$US825,000 as a result. Three other ex-Media Vision employees have already pleaded guilty to the charges, and the SEC is pushing for those remaining under charges to repay the illegally obtained money - to the tune of \$US7 million - along with the possibility of prison time if found guilty.

Aureal representatives have pointed out that Media Vision has almost nothing to do with Aureal Semiconductor, apart from "six desks, five chairs, and some letterheads we use as scratchpads", and that the investigation will have no effect on the present company.

## nVIDIA summer camp

What's the easiest way to make sure game developers and artists make the best possible use of your graphics hardware? Why, hold a summer camp, of course! Co-sponsored by Microsoft, AMD, and Diamond Multimedia, the 'Raise your I.Q.'

program schooled 250 developers representing over 175 companies in the fine art of Image Quality (or I.Q.). The aim was to teach developers how to make the best use of advanced 3D features, photorealistic colours, and higher resolution images into their projects.

The attendees were able for the first time to see Riva's TNT Chipset, as well as tinker around with it and speak with the chipset developers about potentials for the product. Also, though not for the first time, there was information on Microsoft's much anticipated DirectX 6.0 software, and intensive courses on how to make optimum use of the capabilities.



## SIDELINES

n't want to ruin the license that they had obtained by releasing a bad game.

### Multiplay OGS restructured

The Australian online game service Multiplay has undergone a financial restructuring. The details are a little confusing, but the end result is that Multiplay Technologies, founded by David Urquhart with the support of a 'leading retailer' plus other investors, and the US based Total Entertainment Network (TEN) have bought out Multiplay Online Pty Ltd, owned by Nova Pacific Capital. The restructuring has enabled Multiplay to leap into the black, or break even point, as their hardware systems are no longer leased but are owned by the company, along with the success of the Free Multiplay service, and a rise in subscriptions of late. So, finally, an Australian games-related company is beginning to look more and more like a healthy and profitable entity, and that's what we like to see. More information can be obtained from [www.multiplay.com.au](http://www.multiplay.com.au)

### Oops...

In PowerPlay # 27 we ran a news piece about Roadshow picking up the distribution rights for Beam International Limited. The piece contained one error (that Roadshow Interactive are publishers), plus an implication that \$AUD6 million wasn't a particularly impressive projected sales figure. The facts are:

1/ Roadshow Interactive are not publishers, they are distributors of products for leading publishers such as Acclaim, Infogrames, GTI PC, Telstar, Black Friar, Interplay Console, Beam and selected Independents.  
2/ Australia normally represents approx. 5% of the US market, so if the US sales projections are \$80 million, 5% would be \$4 million. So Roadshow's target of minimum \$6 million in sales with the addition of NZ and Asia exceeds the US forecast pro rata. We also implied, unintentionally, that Roadshow may be having some difficulties. This was not our intention, or apparently, is the case. We wouldn't have the faintest idea how well they are doing as a company, nor do we care - games being our only concern. So, for anyone who thought we were a bit rough on Roadshow Interactive, apologies. They're a fine company, one of the finest, dammit.

### Starcraft lawsuit dropped

The furor that erupted when it was discovered that Blizzard had illegally obtained users information when they logged on to the company's battle.net server and entered an incorrect password, has passed, and the whole tawdry incident can be put behind us. That the offence actually occurred was never really in doubt, and details on just why the lawsuit has been dropped are not forthcoming as yet, but Blizzard made it known that the suit had been dismissed. All that was said apart from that was that Blizzard had agreed not to repeat the electronic sniffing technique, and would not allow the same of anyone that licensed Blizzard games.



# NewsWire US



**Don St John**

It's the dog days of summer here (it's a Northern Hemisphere thing, but your turn will

come, I promise), and I must say that if it wasn't for Unreal and Cyberstorm 2, I'd be reduced to laying around on a beach all day long. Which wouldn't be good—you know, skin cancer and all that. They don't make us like they used to.

Really, this is the tough time of year to be a gamer, as usual, which brings me to the biggest problem in the games industry year in and year out—release schedules. Once again, there's a relative dearth of games out right at this moment, and an unplayable onslaught coming around the corner.

Now, would I play Cyberstorm 2 if it landed in my mailbox or nearby store in November? Probably not. Not because it wouldn't be good enough to play; I'm enjoying it now. But because it'd get caught up in the flood of holiday-season products, and there's only enough time and money then to get a few things. (Or, for us poor, put-upon game reviewers, so many boxes sitting on the desk that we can't get to 'em for months.)

That's just dumb. It takes either a ton of hype or spectacular word of mouth to push a game out of the holiday pack; Lord only knows how many deserving titles bite the sales dust because they couldn't get enough shelf space or attention. Even sequels can benefit from coming out in the off-season; I'll be one person playing a lot more Monster Truck Madness 2 now than I could in January.

That's why you should vote with your \$AUDs now. The new stuff that's reaching store shelves certainly benefits the companies smart enough to put them out in the off-season (I notice that Microsoft and Sierra, no surprise, are among the companies always canny enough to spread out their releases). But it serves you, the gamer, too. This is the time to crack open your wallets, find a couple gems that might escape your attention at Christmas, and let the companies know that game sales really are possible at all times of the year.



**Cyberstorm 2 - an average title that will benefit being released in the "off season"**

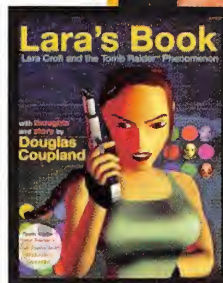
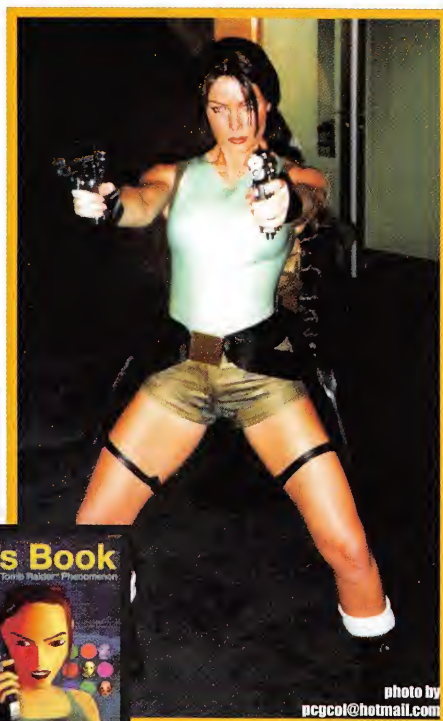
## GenX writer takes on Lara

It's a match almost made in heaven. He's a celebrated 'young persons' author who popularised the 20-something term 'Generation X'. She is perhaps the most recognisable and celebrated virtual person in the world. The two have come together in a book by the former about the latter - Douglas Coupland's 'Lara's Story: Lara Croft and the Tomb Raider phenomenon'.

It's not, as you might first expect, a fictional account of the life of Lara and the Tomb's that she raids, instead it is a bit like a hints and tips guide with some snippets of quasi-intellectual ramblings about the uzi-toting, alligator leaping heroine of the gravity defying breasts, all in the inimitable

Coupland style. He wanted to take a look at the Lara phenomenon while still creating something that would appeal to existing fans of the TR series, so the book is something of a combination of these two facets.

Coupland is an unabashed Lara Croft fan, seeing her as a perfect example of the "ultimate alpha female" because she runs with wolves, jumps over alligators and shoots bad guys, though he doesn't seem to make much mention of her oversized mammary glands or unarguable sex appeal to the 10-18 demographic and how this has been manipulated by her promoters for their ends



(though there are 'thousands of pictures' included within the book...). Co-authored by Kip

Ward, who has written playguides for Tomb Raider 2 and Quake 2 previously, the book should have been released locally by the time you read this for an expected retail price of around \$30.

## Origin's doing it for free

The Wing Commander series has been derided in the past for becoming too much like a movie, with little emphasis on gameplay. Wing Commander: Prophecy was a step in the right direction, however, and won back quite a few fans for developers Origin Systems. In a move that's likely to endear them even more to fans of the series, Origin have announced that the sequel/expansion pack for WC: Prophecy will be made available for free via the Internet.

Entitled WC: Secret Ops, the game will feature 56 new missions, though you won't be downloading the game in one big hit. Instead, Origin will be posting fiction about the game on their website to get you in the mood. You'll have plenty of time to read it - while you wait for the 40MB of the game engine to download, but after that it will all be plain sailing. After the huge game engine download is completed, each mission will only be around 1-4MB, with a new mission available each week. It's all part of a Net content strategy by Origin, to get people to their web page on a regular basis, though the game is being released for free as their way of thanking those who have stayed with the series since its inception. It's not clear at the moment as to whether



any gaming magazines will be allowed to carry the game engine and/or missions on their cover CDs, but rest assured, if we're allowed to save you 5 or 6 hours of downloading, then we'll do it for sure.

Origin GM Neil Young said that the company would be looking into using the internet as a distribution point for their future games, but was quick to point out that it wasn't expected to replace or subsume their existing retail distribution model.



# Sabrina comes to your PC

In what's becoming a very disturbing trend, there's news of yet another computer 'game' being created based upon a television series. Yes, that kooky (and aesthetically pleasing, Ed.) gal Sabrina: The Teenage Witch will soon be appearing on PCs owned by girls aged 2 to 17 everywhere (and mine too, Ed.). There's not much detail on the content of the game, which is being developed by Simon & Schuster Interactive, but we're promised the task of helping to free Sabrina from a variety of spells that have gone (allegedly) 'hilariously' wrong. Of course, we're expecting a top quality release that will take the world by storm, as per usual (you better believe it, Ed.).

Sabrina doing an above average impression of Princess Leia



## TOP TEN GAMES

Rank  
Developer / Distributor  
TW LW

|                                  |    |                       |
|----------------------------------|----|-----------------------|
| 1                                | 1  | UNREAL                |
| GT INTERACTIVE / ROADSHOW        |    |                       |
| 2                                | 2  | WORLD CUP 98          |
| EA SPORTS / EA                   |    |                       |
| 3                                | 5  | X-FILES               |
| FOX INTERACTIVE / EA             |    |                       |
| 4                                | 4  | STARCRRAFT            |
| BLIZZARD / WOLF                  |    |                       |
| 5                                | 3  | T.A: Core Contingency |
| CAVEDOG / GTI                    |    |                       |
| 6                                | 9  | AFL '98               |
| EA SPORTS / EA                   |    |                       |
| 7                                | 10 | MIGHT & MAGIC 7       |
| NEW WORLD COMPUTING / DIRECTSOFT |    |                       |
| 8                                | 14 | COMMANDOS             |
| EIDOS / OZISOFT                  |    |                       |
| 9                                | 6  | QUAKE II              |
| ACTIVISION / ACTIVISION          |    |                       |
| 10                               | 12 | CROC                  |
| FOX INTERACTIVE / EA             |    |                       |

Week ending 12th July

The ACER best selling charts are carefully compiled from a sample panel of retailers selected across Australia including mass merchants, department stores, specialty software stores and independent outlets. Retailers surveyed include Myer Grace Bros, K Mart, Target, Big W, Harvey Norman Computer Super stores, Hi-Tech World, Video Games Heaven, Games Wizards, Hedlam Computers, and Software Today. ACER assumes no responsibility for any errors or omissions ©1997

Charts supplied by Australian Computer Entertainment Review

**ACER**

## Microprose/Activision/Avalon Hill settle Civilization lawsuit

The battle between Microprose and Activision (and also Avalon Hill) over who owns the rights to the Civilisation name has officially ended. All three parties have come to an agreement out of court which seems amicable enough. The end result is that Microprose is recognised as being the owners of the name Civilisation, though Activision are still allowed to use the name Civilisation: Call To Power for their upcoming Civilisation type sequel. Activision have to acknowledge that while they are developing and producing the game, they are using the name under license from Microprose (and it seems likely that they will be paying for the privilege too). However, Activision also has now acquired the publishing rights for the Playstation version of CivII worldwide (excluding Japan).



## NewsWire UK

Steve Boxer

Sightings of blockbusting titles have, this month, been as rare as hen's teeth, as the industry, having generated all sorts of publicity from E3, returns to keeping a lid on its Christmas releases. But one significant release went almost unreported - the arrival of Microsoft's DirectX 6.0.

Any developer who tells you that he would rather develop chip-specific 3D accelerated versions of his games than let DirectX do all the hard work is lying his arse off. The problem, of course, has been that in the past, DirectX just hasn't been up to the task. But now, with DirectX 6.0, it finally appears to have what it takes - at least, if every developer in this country is to be believed. Having busted a gut to find even one developer with a single bad word to say about DX 6.0, I have met with nothing but abject failure. Could the international sport of Microsoft-bashing be on the way out?

DirectX 6.0 leaves the way clear for the 3D graphics chip fraternity to turn the high-street shops into a battleground this Christmas. Most have new chips out, and only really 3Dfx can claim that their particular API gives them any sort of superiority over the competition. Performance is what counts now.

Having only recently learned how to program properly in 3D using polygons, the stunning increase in performance levels caused by the intense competition between 3D graphics chip manufacturers has led the developer community to peer, with a furrowed gaze, at some impending crossroads. Next year, it is predicted that 3D graphics chips will start to outperform Intel's processors (if only the processor market was as competitive as the 3D accelerator one). It won't be very long before 3D accelerators can shift so many polygons that games will appear in which each polygon is little bigger than a pixel.

At that point, the polygon model of generating 3D graphics will cease to be applicable any more, and the games industry has no idea what will then happen. There are a number of ways in which so-called higher-order surfaces (an umbrella term for pixel-level 3D surface modelling) can be generated (already, for example, Shiny's Dave Perry has got a tessellation engine working, which will take its bow in the filthy and brilliant Messiah). And the industry will have to decide which way is best.

In the meantime, it's great news for we punters, as games will continue to look better and better. While polygons remain, the developer's Holy Grail will start shifting towards concepts like scalability, or giving a single version of a game the ability to assess the hardware on which it is installed and make maximum use of that hardware. Microsoft itself maintains that image quality, rather than raw poly-shifting grunt, will determine which of the next generation of 3D graphics cards do best, which is a nice thought...



# what is sin?

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Please note that some 3-D accelerator card brands utilizing the chipsets listed above  
may not be fully compatible with the 3-D acceleration features of this product.

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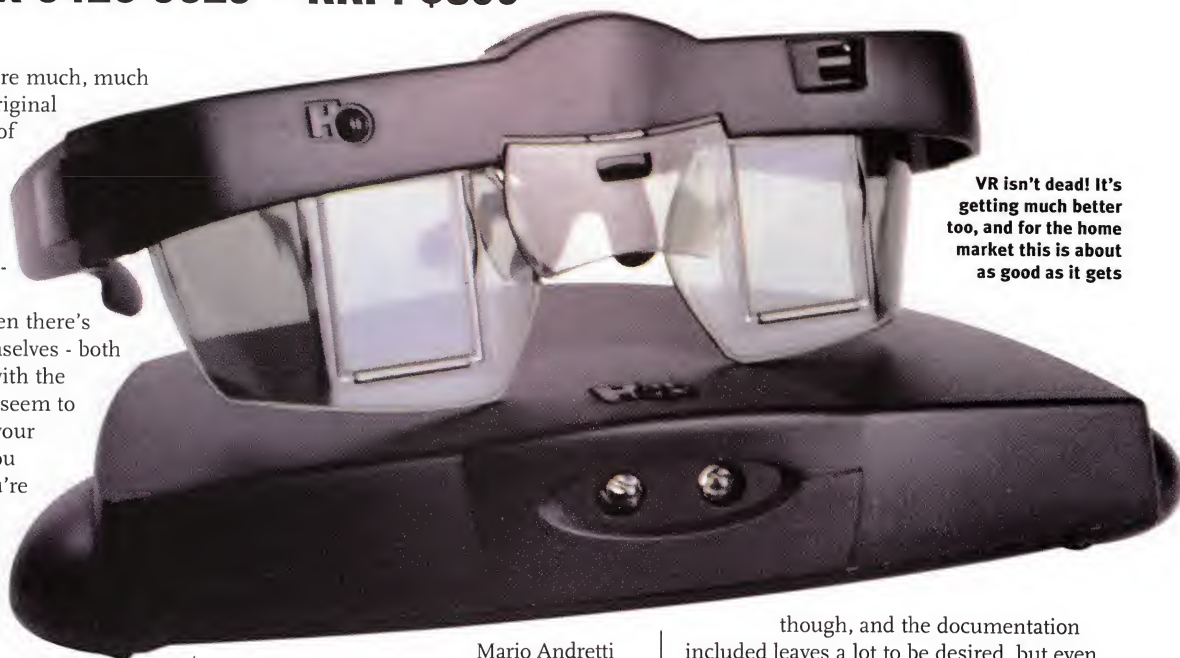


# H3D EYEWEAR SYSTEM

Call: Mindflux 9416 9619 • RRP: \$300

**T**he H3D glasses are much, much better than the original glasses in terms of functionality, price, and ease of use. For starters they are wireless, so rather than have to deal with cords running everywhere, you can move your head at will. Then there's the look of the games themselves - both Quake and Q2 look great with the glasses, the enemies really seem to jump out at you and once your head gets used to the 3D you really begin to feel as if you're on Stroggos.

The unit works by piggy-backing on to your monitor output, with a connection to an infra-red device that sits on top of your monitor and sends a signal to your glasses. The downside is that because of the way the signal is transmitted the maximum resolution you'll see is 640x320 for Quake, and 1024x384 for Quake 2 (with two Voodoo 2's), but the upside is that 3Dfx games are fully supported, and look great. Unfortunately, only Quake, Q2, and



VR isn't dead! It's getting much better too, and for the home market this is about as good as it gets

Mario Andretti  
Racing are supported at this time, though many development companies have seen the glasses and are planning to support them in the future, with support for games like Unreal, Daikatana, and plenty more in the pipeline.

You might still find that you get a bit of a headache after a while with the glasses

though, and the documentation included leaves a lot to be desired, but even so these are easily the best 3D glasses we've seen thus far and the indications are that many of the top games (particularly from the FPA genre) will include support for it in the near future. At \$300 they aren't cheap, but if you have the cash available, they're well worth it.

# T LEADER 3D JOYPAD

Call: Guillemot/Ubisoft 02 9362 1414 • RRP: \$69.95



**W**hat the hey?! For those of you who have ventured to the dark side and acknowledge the existence of consoles, this thing should look familiar. Yes kids, it's a PC control pad modelled on the standard N64 controller. While we have our own range of good control pads here in PCLand, the Nintendo design is a rather good one, so we PCers did the dominant lifeform thing and stole the design.

If you've held an N64 pad you'd know and understand. This is a seriously ingenious design. A standard D-pad on the left and a set of 6 buttons on the right complete the regulation pad setup. This thing is designed to be used in different ways, so right in the middle is an analogue joystick (the world's smallest), behind it at the back of the pad is an analogue trigger and 2 shoulder buttons complete the layout.

Depending on the game, you'd move your hands around and only hold the bits you're using. The complete 90's gamer should possess a control pad and there's nothing you'd ever want to do that this one can't handle.



# SAITEK

## R4 Racing Wheel

Innovision 1300 785795

RRP: \$TBA

Since the dawn of PC gaming, humankind has quested hard for the perfect steering wheel - or failing that, something that actually works. Gamers, the quest is over, for we now have three decent wheels! Six months ago the World's First Proper Wheel arrived in the form of the utterly wonderful Ferraro Advantage 1. One month ago we were treated to an advance look at the Microsoft Force Feedback wheel, and now, Saitek has rounded out the mix, providing the world with a third option for PC drivers.

Sitting next to the comparatively austere Ferraro and Microsoft wheels, the Saitek screams for attention. Its a very cool, very mechanical - almost very military. Don't be alarmed though, for unlike the other over-gimmicked wheels doing the rounds (Per4mer springs to mind), the R4 is a reassuring blend of functionality and extravagant but usable extra features.

Also, don't be alarmed by the gear shifter on the right of the unit, for this is

there only as an option for those that prefer this variety of shifting. For the real deal there's F1-style levers behind the wheel, as well as programmable buttons, which we think are best used as camera or rear view selectors.

In the Nice Touch department the Saitek lets you adjust the spring tension for both the pedals and the wheel itself.

Saitek also have a Force Feedback version coming this Christmas too. Exciting times! No price had been established at the time of writing.

It's got the looks alright, & comes up trumps for functionality too



# JET LEADER 3D

Guillemot/Ubisoft 02 9362 1414

RRP: \$79.95

Good stick, this. There's nothing military, sci-fi or phallic about it. Instead, the Jet Leader 3D is sensibly designed with an innovation or two to make it really shine.

Movement is smooth and there's none of that annoying click as the stick passes through the center of each axis. The buttons, in keeping with the generally austere design philosophy, are utilitarian. This is no "looks great works crap" stick, for careful thought has been put into function rather than form. Lefties will be right at home, for the layout of the switchwork is perfectly symmetrical, while the huge han-

drest is rubber lined for extra comfort.

The size of the stick too, is perfect - many sticks (Saitek, Thustmaster FLCS) are way oversized, meaning you have to lift your hand to reach the top buttons.

Another interesting feature are the two fire triggers. Putting a button at the front of a stick is common practise, but the simplicity of the second trigger is impressive.

Considering the opposition in its price range, the Jet Leader 3D is fantastic value and a stick you'll use for all game types.

No silly frills, just great design & fully featured



# RACE LEADER 3D

RRP \$129 • Ubisoft 9362 1414

There are two kinds of steering wheels in the world: those designed specifically for the PC and those ugly and ergonomically questionable devices made for the Playstation and N64, but with a PC adaptor.

These console mutations are usually much cheaper than a full-blown PC equivalent and so are appealing to gamers wanting a wheel in their arsenal, but at a budget price. Enter the Race Leader. Of all the hybrid wheels to pass through our testing facilities (a good hour thrash at TOCA Touring Car Championship), this was the one we'd be most prepared to live with on a permanent basis. It sports all the features; good and bad, that we'd expect. The good is that it's fairly festooned with buttonage. There's a D-pad too, plus behind-the-wheel level/clackers for gearing.

The silly bit is that you hold the device in place by sitting on it - these things are designed for lounges, not sporty PC gaming chairs.

Still, at \$129 it's a good \$100 cheaper than a proper PC wheel and is the answer if you're not a hardcore race-head, but want the equipment for the job at hand.





# SIDEWINDER FREESTYLE PRO

## Microsoft

**RRP: \$129**

**Available: October**

**T**here's nothing like a good, solid truism. In the games scene, one such indisputable fact of life is that motion-sensing controllers just don't work.

Comfortable in this knowledge, we scoffed when first presented with the Microsoft Sidewinder Freestyle Pro. A motion sensing control pad that you'd actually use? Yeah right.

Well, wouldn't it be just like Microsoft to spot a hole in the market and come up with the goods. That's what they've done, so dispel those myths, for this here is the World's First proper motion sensing controller.



First things first, it works exactly like the standard and excellent Freestyle Pro pad, so regardless of its technical trickery, your starting point is that it's a very good control pad. Next, the clever stuff. Here Microsoft have done their reputation some considerable good. It works intuitively, naturally and with a surprising degree of accuracy. The absolutely perfect game for this baby is Microsoft's own Motocross Madness (due for Xmas). Bearing a slight ergonomic resemblance to a set of bike handlebars (no, really!) helps enormously. It takes about 5 seconds to get the hang of using the Freestyle. Lean into corners by tilting gently, control the attitude of the rider by tilting forwards and backwards and land after a huge jump by positioning the pad just so.

It'll cope easily with fast and abrupt moves too, and again, the amount of precision you can exercise is what makes it all worthwhile.



**No, really, it really does work excellently. Put this on your "must have" list immediately**

The Freestyle will work with any joystick supporting game. We tested it with Decent Freespace and it was a rather special game experience. You soon forget that you're even holding the thing - swooping and twisting in space combat was as immersive as it has ever been.

If you've got a decent joystick already and need a control pad, check the Freestyle out. Give it a test play in the shop to see if you like it, it's a very different way to play and we think we like it.

# PYTHON VIDEO CAPTURE CARD

## Videonics

**RRP: \$749**

**C.R. Kennedy & Co 03 9823 1555**

**A** couple of years ago, video cameras weren't all that thick on the ground. The technology was still relatively new, and the price for the camcorders put them out of the range of most people. They're still quite expensive and it's not like every man and his dog now has one, but they're still much more affordable and plentiful than then. If you have both a camcorder and a PC (or perhaps just a VCR and a PC), then you're probably quite interested to hear about video capturing software that allows you to edit and generally muck about with your home movies.

The Videonics Python unit is a little different to most other video capturing solutions. For starters, there's no PCI card to plug in, and neither does it make use of a serial port. Instead it's the parallel port, most commonly used for printers, that the Python uses to connect to your computer. This doesn't mean you have to unplug your printer each time you want to use it though, as there is a pass through port so that both devices

can be attached at the same time (though both cannot be used at the same time).

That's not where the differences end though. The python unit comes with both an RCA and S-Video port, though no audio inputs. Instead, you need to attach audio jacks (from whatever device you're using, the TV, VCR, or Camcorder) to your audio card. The Python software will synchronise the sound with the video, but this does seem to be a messy solution.

The range of software included is comprehensive and powerful though, with Microsoft's Netmeeting (for data conferencing), Xing's MPEG player/encoder/streaming software, Kai's Photo Soap, and Astound Multimedia Presentation software, along with

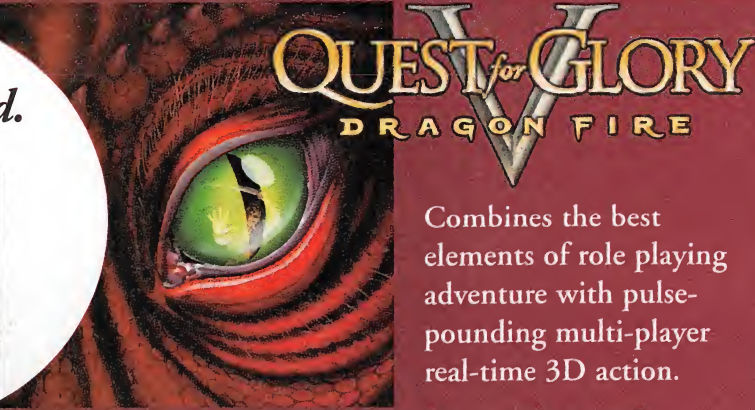
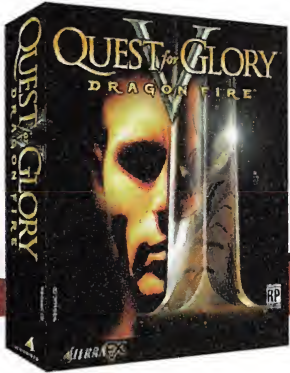


the Python software to view and edit your movies live. For \$749 it's on the expensive side of things and there are cheaper units that perform the same functions, but the software included does go some way towards redressing the price issue.



# Hot *It's gonna be a* Sierra Summer

*Draw forth and sharpen your sword.*



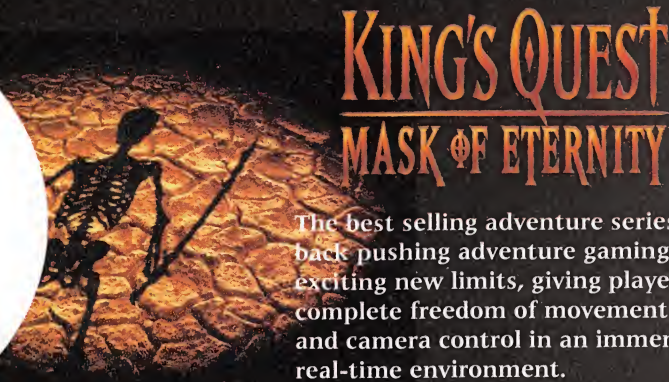
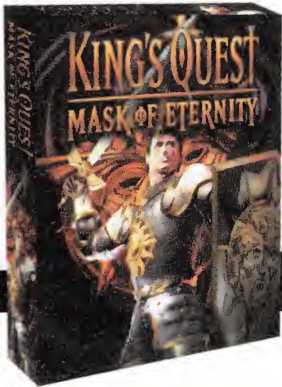
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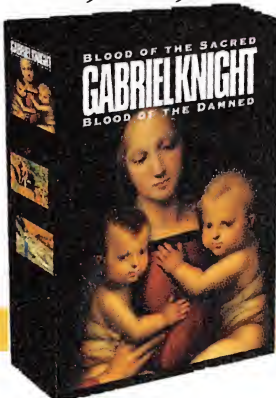
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SIERRA





# PCI SOUND CARDS

3 impressive new PCI A3D sound cards with great sound quality, 1 with a great price tag.

## Professional Sound System

### Specifications:

**Midi Wavetable Memory Size:** Not specified  
**Polyphony:** 64 instruments or simultaneous notes.

**Effects:** Reverb, Chorus.

**Full Duplex:** Yes

**Sample Rate:** 5Hz - 44Khz

**Front and Rear speaker support:** No  
**3D sound support:** Aural

**RRP:** \$89.

**Contact:** Innovision 1300 785 795

You could be excused for thumbing your nose at a sound card called the "Professional Sound System", for these are normally the kinds of names reserved for cards in plain white packaging that have somehow made their way from the sweat shops in Asia.

Whatever the origin of the PSS is, though, it does at least come in a pretty red box and although where it's manufactured is an unknown, the card is designed in the U.S.

Sonically this card is both impressive considering its budget price tag, yet also has some expected limitations. The main downside this card has is when booting up, the noise it gives out is beyond irritating. Pops, whistles, ker-chings and numerous

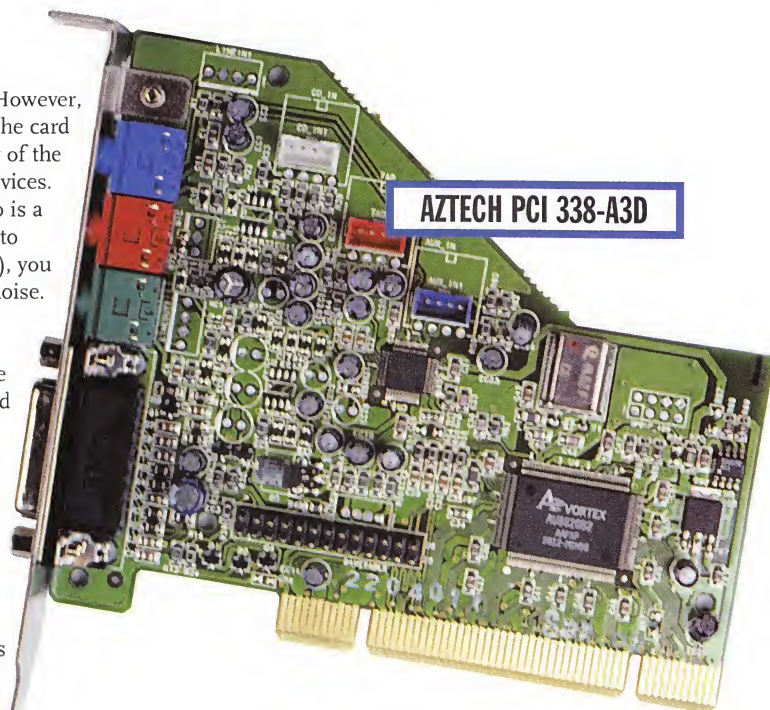
other annoying noises. However, once Win 95/98 starts, the card becomes as silent as any of the other more expensive devices.

What this equates too is a situation where booting to DOS (before Win 95/98), you will have to suffer said noise. Starting 95/98 first will clear the problem and going to DOS from there will give noise free sound support.

On the up side is that the PSS is rather feature rich for \$89 - Aural A3D support being its greatest asset. Featuring the Vortex A3D chip, its 3D performance is dynamic and left/right separation is on par with other A3D cards. The PSS isn't as clear as the Orchid Nu Sound or Yamaha Waveforce but almost as good as the Monster Sound. It fails in the realms of 112Kb and lower .wav output, however, with sound quality becoming way to trebly.

Midi is also great, utilising the same sound engine as the Nusound, Midi sounds, all 64 of them are clear and of a good quality.

For \$89, it's hard to go wrong with this card considering all that it offers. That is; if you're looking for a sound card that's cheap. The Orchid Nu Sound is still the best quality card but the PSS definitely delivers a lot considering its low price.



## Aztech PCI 338-A3D

### Specifications:

**Midi Polyphony:** 64 instruments or simultaneous notes.

**Effects:** Reverb, Chorus.

**Full Duplex:** Yes

**Sample Rate:** 5Hz - 48Khz

**Front and Rear speaker support:** No

**RRP:** \$99.

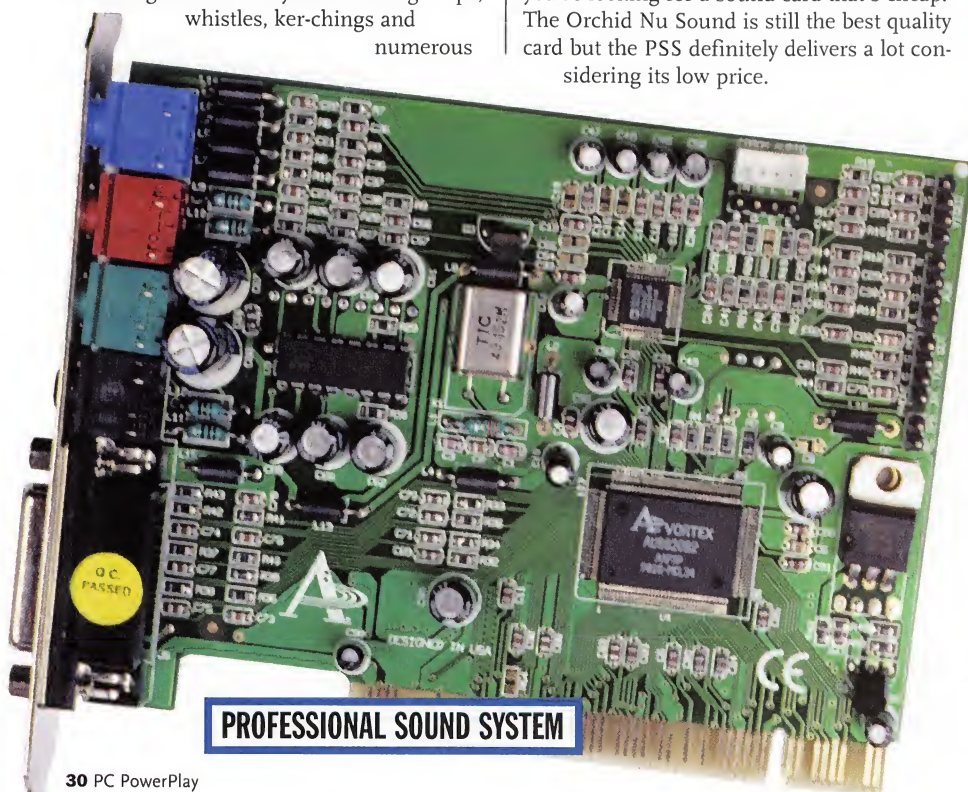
Upon opening the package for the Aztech card I couldn't help but notice that what was in front of me looked identical to the Orchid Nu Sound - right down to the slanting cut that gave the Nu Sound its distinguishing features.

The similarities don't stop there though. Not only does the card look the same, it even sounds the same. That is to say, it offers extremely high quality sound with A3D effects that become so much more alive than in any other sound solution.

The Aztech offers a sense of stereo separation that surpasses that of other cards. Sound quality is premium, with a clarity that allows you hear sounds from CDs you have never heard before, even at high volumes.

Wave output is spectacular, allowing you to hear the difference between 128 Kilobit and 192 Kilobit output. Midi is extremely good and also of a very high quality.

Finally, the Aural 3D effects the card





offers are sensational. Sounds seem to come from all over, even from above.

This is the card to have, but only if your setup is a 2 speaker one. These cards cry out for a 4 speaker solution, or at least I do...

## Diamond Monster Sound MX200

### Specifications:

**Midi Polyphony:** 64 instruments or simultaneous notes.

**Effects:** Reverb, Chorus, Dream FX

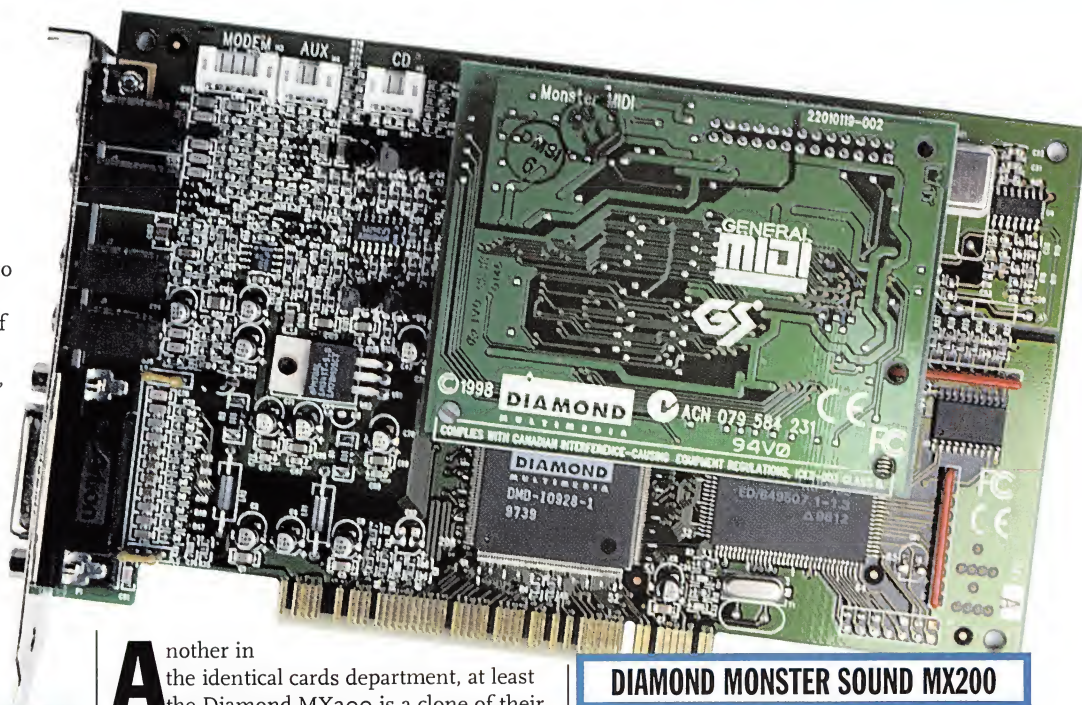
**Full Duplex:** Yes

**Sample Rate:** 5Hz - 44Khz

**Front and Rear speaker support:** Yes

**RRP:** \$369.

**Contact:** Chips and bits 039 696 1911



**DIAMOND MONSTER SOUND MX200**

**A**nother in the identical cards department, at least the Diamond MX200 is a clone of their own (now defunct) product; the Monster Sound 3D. There is a slight difference in that the 200 offers far superior Midi over the MS3D. Sadly though, that's where the improvements stop.

The MS3D and the 200 are great sound card, featuring digital surround sound or independent front/rear speaker support. Setting up 4 speakers in your room to play an A3D game is incredible. It beats analogue surround sound (i.e. Television/Home the-

atre) because the independence of the speakers changes the environment so radically.

Sonically, these sound cards are of a very high quality, but at \$369 compared to a budget card like the PSS at \$89, which features only marginally less performance... You decide.

Overall though, these cards are worth it for 4 speaker independence.

*Jere Lawrence*

# BLASTER PC

**Creative Pacific 02 9906 8887**

**T**he "Creative" name has been synonymous with gaming and multimedia from the beginning. Most gamers have at least one Creative card in their machines; a Sound Blaster, most probably. However, it is perfectly possible to assemble a complete PC drawing solely from the Creative range of multimedia products. Which is, in fact, exactly what Creative themselves have done.

The Blaster PC showcases the company's wide range of products, which is great for Creative and it's also the finest off-the-shelf gaming PC in the business, which is good for you. Aside from the obvious Sound Blaster, the Blaster PC also includes the new PCI64 sound card, as well as their Encore DVD CD. Primary video is their Permedia 2-based Graphics Blaster Exxtreme, while 3D

duties are handled by Creative's Voodoo 2. The Cambridge Soundworks multimedia speakers round out the setup, (we gave these the Hot Hardware Award in last year's Hot Hardware Guide) and they rock hard. The

bass is tight and powerful, which is no great surprise considering that the sub-woofer weighs several tons...

You'll be able to specify the innards of your desires. On offer are the standard range of CPUs - Pentium II 300/333/350/400 and 450. RAM and hard disk size is also up to you.

Being able to customise the specifications, together with Creative's unquestionable expertise in gaming hardware makes for a potent gaming beast that you would feel a lot better about buying than a here-today, gone-tomorrow clone shop.





# GAMEWORTHY?

## The Mystery of the 100MHz System Bus

**Garry Wallis breaks the good and bad news for upgraders looking at 100MHz motherboards.**

**R**ecently a lot of people have been asking me if should they upgrade their Pentium II system to a gaming rig with a 100MHz-system bus.

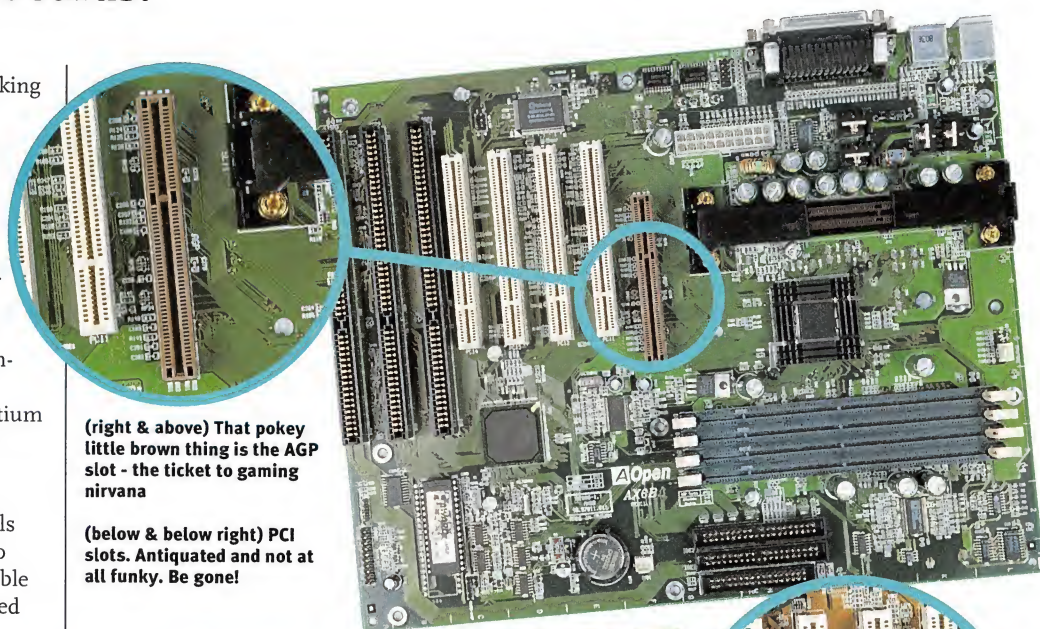
The BX board has just recently hit the streets, closely followed by the 350 and 400MHz Pentium II's, so of course everyone wants one. What actual performance increase can you expect using a system with a 100MHz-system bus? To answer that question we will need a common ground to base our decision on. Meaning, we need a 66MHz-based Pentium II processor as well as a 100MHz based Pentium II that run at the same clock speed. There are no official Pentium II 66MHz and Pentium II 100MHz models that share a common speed. What we do know though is that 300MHz is achievable with both bus speeds. A system bus speed of 66MHz and a clock multiplier of 4.5 yields a processor speed of 300MHz. A system bus speed of 100MHz and a clock multiplier of 3 obviously makes 300MHz.

One problem though, is that there is no Pentium II 300MHz available with a 100MHz-bus speed so we had to improvise. A Pentium 333MHz Deschute processor is quite happy to run at 100MHz x 3.

We now have our common test bed to perform some benchmarks. We performed 4 different game benchmarks with both an AGP 1740 card and a Diamond Monster 3D PCI. Take a look at the results.

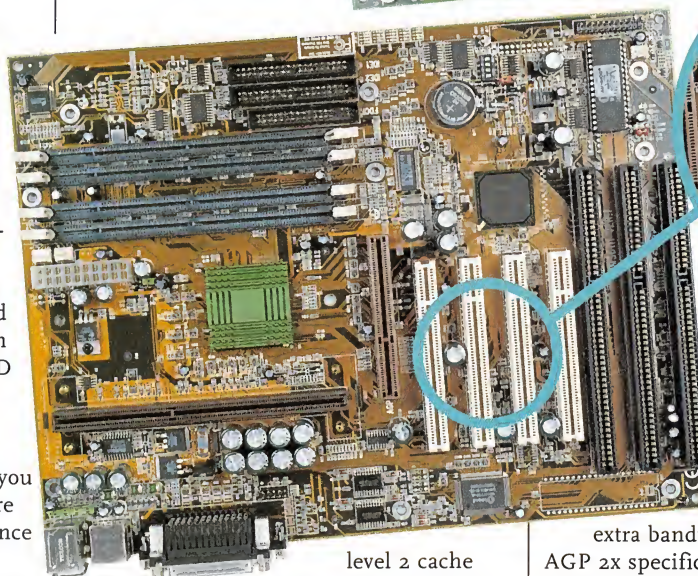
### The low down

Looking over these benchmark scores you can definitely see a pattern. That is, there is very little system performance difference in games with an increase of the system bus to 100MHz. This is due mainly to the fact that the Pentium II has its level 2 cache on board the SEC cartridge. The



(right & above) That pokey little brown thing is the AGP slot - the ticket to gaming nirvana

(below & below right) PCI slots. Antiquated and not at all funky. Be gone!



throughput is just 528 Mbytes per second. When this is increased to 100MHz the overall throughput jumps to 800 Mbytes Per second. AGP needs this

extra bandwidth especially with the AGP 2x specification. This is to retrieve its textures directly from system memory. As you can see though, even with Intel's own 3D chip, most games around at the moment do not even try to stretch the limits of the old 528Mbytes per second bus speed. The Forsaken demo does show some hints of how the faster bus speed will aid newer AGP cards and high texture quality games. The Increase in bus speed gives Forsaken nearly 9 frames per second improvement. This increase in performance must be due to the increased bandwidth that AGP gets from the increased bus speed. Looking at the benchmarks for the Voodoo will prove this fact, as there is relatively no increase in performance from 66 to 100MHz-bus on a Voodoo.

What does all this mean? Well in simple

level 2 cache then runs on an independent bus that is clocked at half the speed of the processor clock. So a Pentium II 300 would have its level 2 cache running at 150MHz regardless of the system bus speed.

### AGP loves 100MHz

So what is 100MHz-system bus good for? The real reason the 100MHz-system bus was introduced for the Pentium II is to provide AGP with enough bandwidth. Let me explain, when the system bus is 66MHz, the overall system





# Test Results

## Forsaken

(DirectX used on G460/Glide used on Voodoo1)

### Pentium II (100MHz x 3 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **58.65**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **52.72**

### Pentium II (66MHz x 4.5 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **49.84**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **52.85**

## Incoming Dux et Robur

(DirectX used on G460/Glide used on Voodoo1)

### Pentium II (100MHz x 3 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **39.61**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **29.29**

### Pentium II (66MHz x 4.5 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **38.79**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **29.23**

## Quake II

(OpenGL used for Both)

### Pentium II (100MHz x 3 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **36.9**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **22.5**

### Pentium II (66MHz x 4.5 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **35.9**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **22.4**

## Turok

(DirectX used on G460/Glide used on Voodoo1)

### Pentium II (100MHz x 3 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **77.0**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **62.0**

### Pentium II (66MHz x 4.5 @ 300MHz)

Diamond G460 AGP 2x Direct3D  
640x480 **73.3**

Diamond Monster 3D PCI Glide  
640x480 **59.3**



**Incoming - great for testing system performance. Not so great for playing, unfortunately**

terms it means the 100MHz-system bus will offer very little improvement for systems that use a PCI based 3D accelerator. AGP on the other hand will absolutely love this extra bandwidth when we get some capable AGP 2 x based cards.

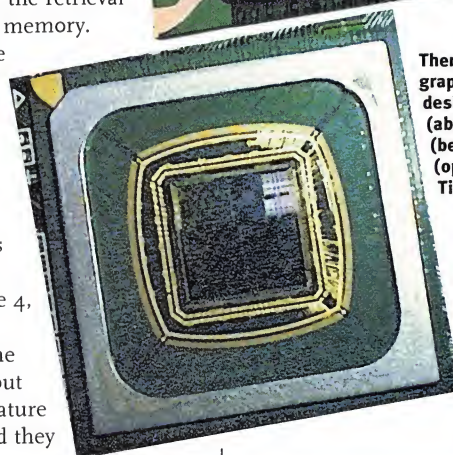
### PCI same old same old

The funny thing is though, it seems that 3D card manufacturers will not use AGP 2 x for the retrieval of textures from system memory.

Just take a look at all the new up-coming 3D chips that are around. The only one that supports AGP 2 x with DIME (Direct Memory Execute) is Intel's own i740 chip. All the others including S3 Savage3D, Number 9's Ticket2Ride 4, Matrox G200, Voodoo Banshee, PVRSG and the Riva TNT are AGP 2 x but do not use the DIME feature to store textures. Instead they are all using 8-16MB SDRAM/SGRAM memory configurations on the board and just use AGP for its increased speed, AGP 2 x is 133MHz over PCI's measly 33MHz.

Storing textures in system memory maybe good in theory, but newer 3D accelerators will be increasing their bandwidth requirements faster than the local memory subsystem can keep up.

If 3D chip manufacturers actually used AGP 2x with DIME capabilities we would expect to have to buy a new motherboard that supports RAMBUS DRAM and a new 200MHz system bus speed next week! But, as always, for now we wait and see.



There are only a handful of graphics chips actually designed for AGP (above) The i740 (below) The RIVA TNT & (opposite page) Number 9's Ticket to Ride

## Test System configuration

- Pentium II Deschute 333MHz underclocked to 300MHz
- EPOX 61BXA-m 440BX based motherboard (Latest BIOS revision)
- 2 x 32MB SDRAM DIMMS (PC100 spec)
- 24x Acer CD-ROM
- Quantum Fireball SE4.3GB UDMA
- Terrasound PCI Soundcard

- Diamond Monster 3D (Driver ver. 1.09/Glide 2.43/OpenGL Mini-driver)
- Diamond Stealth G460 (Driver build 1400 with OpenGL)



# WINDOWS 98

## Good for Games?

It's the most important question facing gamers today — should I upgrade to Windows 98?

**A**nd what an incredibly important question it is too. For the price of the Windows 98 upgrade you could buy a top-notch game and a few cases of beer to boot. So why fork out raw cash for something that looks just like Windows 95? Are you missing out by not jumping on the upgrade bandwagon?

Darn good question. All that counts from a gamer's perspective is what we here at PC PowerPlay call the UGE, the Ultimate Gaming Experience. All of us have enjoyed a UGE at some time in our gaming lives — back when Elite first appeared, when Doom graced our PCs, when Star Control made itself known or, more recently, with games like Total Annihilation, Starcraft and Unreal. It's different for everyone though, since each gamer has their own personal taste. The point is the same — we play for the UGE, we play to experience that feeling of utter joy and sense of accomplishment, immersed in the game to the extent that reality becomes something you do between gaming sessions.

Integral to the UGE is a machine capable of bringing you this moving experience, and of the machine the operating system is the single most important factor. Games are naught without the platform to run them on, and Windows 95 has established itself as the platform for gaming.

So, does Windows 98 enhance or increase your machine's ability to provide you with the Ultimate Gaming Experience? Umm... no. Well, ok, a little bit. Let's take a look at what's new:



### Integrated multimedia

Windows 98 incorporates support for DVD (Digital Video Disk), MMX processors, force feedback joysticks, USB (Universe Serial Bus)

**TRENDY WEB PAGE STUFF BURIED IN FOLDERS. LOOKS NICE, DOESN'T DO MUCH.**

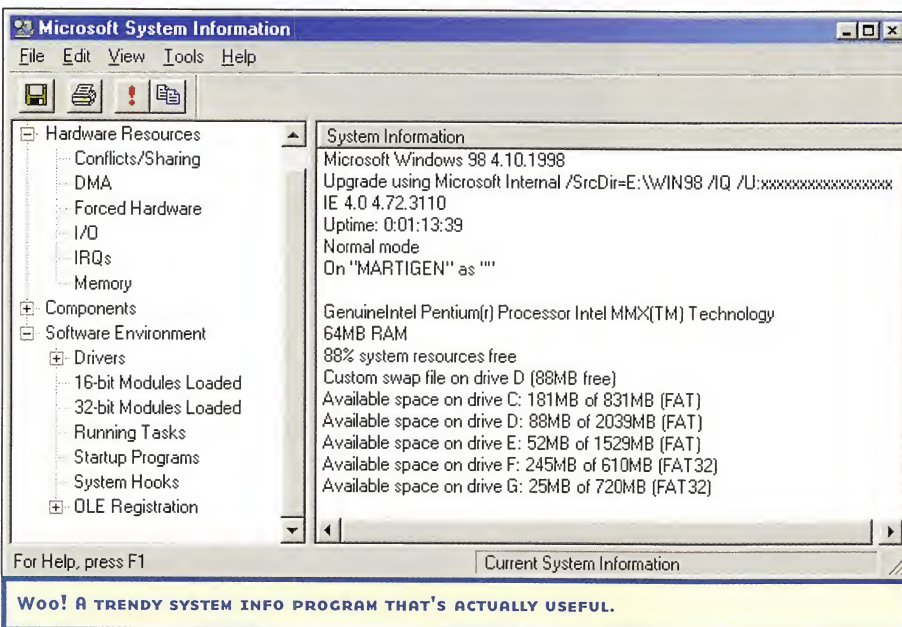
devices and, one of the more cooler features, support for multiple monitors. You can connect two or more monitors up to your system, as long as you have as many video cards, and work or play between them all.

### FAT32 support

First appearing in Windows 95 OSR 2, FAT32 is a revamp of the antiquated FAT16 file system, and allows Windows 98 to store a heck of a lot more information on a drive than Windows 95. Actually, it's more a case of Windows 95 was particularly good at wasting disk space and Windows 98 doesn't waste so much.

### New interface

Where to start? IE4 is integrated into Windows 98, blurring the line between desktop and Web content whether you're connected to the Internet or not. It's best summarised as a new interface methodology, and for some it might be quite appealing. Luckily you can disable Web based content on the desktop if you prefer the traditional



**Woo! A TRENDY SYSTEM INFO PROGRAM THAT'S ACTUALLY USEFUL.**



## A warning on upgrading

If you go the full hike and decide to get Windows 98, perform a clean installation, not an upgrade.

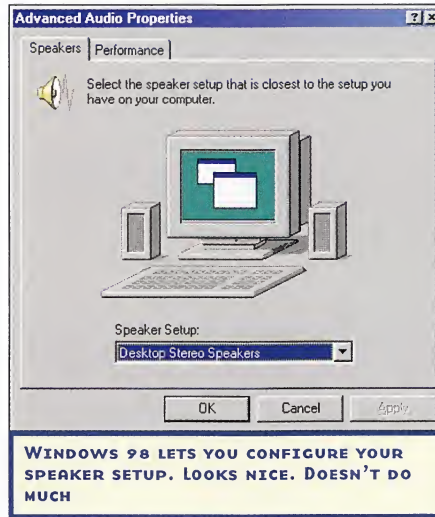
When upgrading over Windows 95, Windows 98 doesn't perform full hardware detection and, through what can only be described as 'lack of testing' by Microsoft, upgraded installations often cause serious problems. The IT media is currently overplaying the hype around Windows 98's new upgrade problems, but these problems do exist. Upgrading has so far been known to cause instability, trash drives and break working applications — and until Microsoft releases a service pack, your best bet is to install Windows 98 on a clean system.

A clean installation simply means deleting or formatting your old Windows drive and installing Windows 98 onto your 'clean' system. Yes, it involves installing all your applications again and configuring Windows the way you like it, but your clean Windows 98 setup will be faster and more stable than the Windows 95 you're replacing.

Windows interface. Still, many of the interface changes include aesthetic enhancements and a heap of handy features that were originally in the Windows 95 Plus! Pack. For general useability, Windows 98 is much better than its predecessor.

### Drivers

Windows 98 comes with a massive driver database, and does a pretty good job of detecting all of your hardware and installing correct drivers. Those with 3Dfx Voodoo 1 cards will be able to play 3Dfx games as soon as Windows is installed, as it detects and installs



3Dfx drivers automatically. DirectX 5.0 is also integrated directly into the operating system, making Windows 98 the first PC OS designed to play games.

### Stability

Windows 95's stability is legendary in the history of computers as the most unstable OS ever invented. If you've never experienced a crash, hang, or Blue Screen Of Death (BSOD) then rest assured you're using another operating system. Having claimed this crown, Microsoft actually spent a fair amount of time improving the core of Windows 95 to make it more stable and efficient. Windows 98 manages threads and memory much better than its predecessor which, hopefully, will equate to better stability.

### Performance

Windows 98 boots up and shuts down much faster than Windows 95 and also includes a new application load optimiser — the OS monitors the applications you use most frequently and moves them to the front of your hard drive

when you defragment your drive. The internal disk cache has also been revamped and no longer sucks up excess memory. In fact, the disk cache now works as a temporary storage space for applications, allowing you to run programs directly from the cache. The speed difference is definitely noticeable.

### Net play

Eager to improve network performance, Microsoft re-worked the Windows' TCP/IP stack and how Windows handles networking. Faster TCP/IP support should see your Internet access run smoothly and a new feature called IP autoconfiguration automatically assigns TCP/IP addresses on local networks. What this means is that when you and your pals get together for a LAN gaming day, you don't have to waste valuable gaming hours giving each machine its own address and screwing around with networking — just hook all the machines up correctly and each Windows 98 box will scan the network for addresses and choose one that isn't used. Very nice.

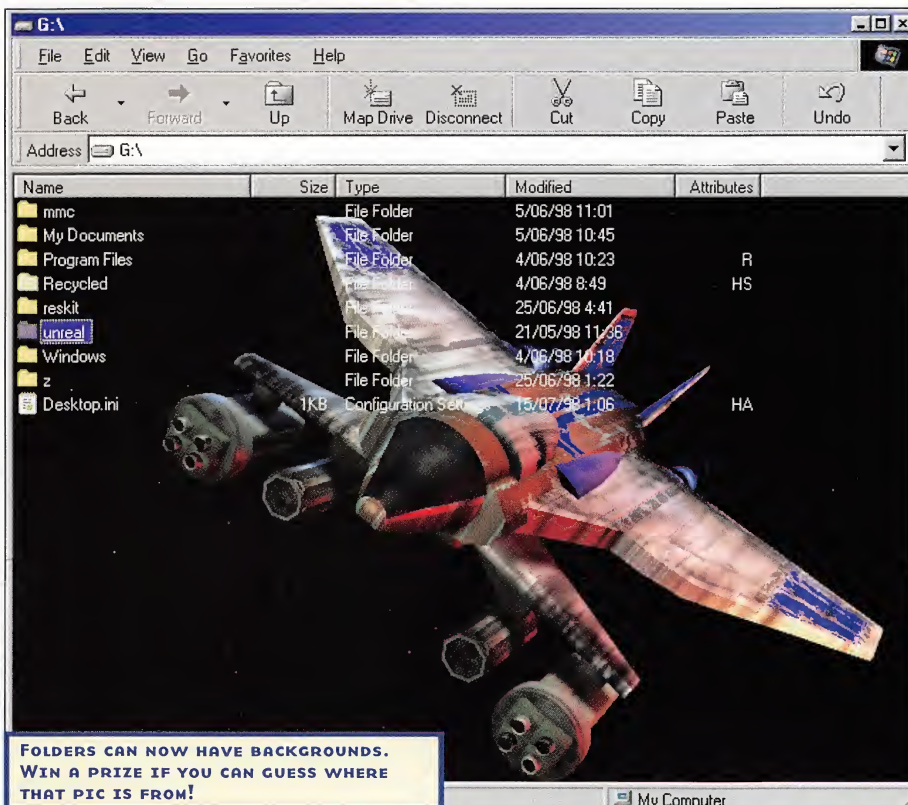
### Cool things

Windows 98 comes with loads of system utils and configuration apps that make checking out and optimising your system easy. Also included is a new HTML help file system that's actually useful, online updating for getting automatic upgrades to the OS, and multilink channel aggregation for ISDN and modem links. What's that? It lets you share multiple modems or ISDN channels to increase your bandwidth. Tres' nice, though few gamers will have the hardware and the connections to use it.

All this sounds good doesn't it? That's because it is, and from this gamers point of view, Windows 98 is definitely worth the upgrade. However, it's not worth the money. Microsoft is playing the market by grossly overpricing what is effectively an operating system upgrade, and one that turns Windows 95 into what it should have been in the first place. If you can afford to upgrade, by all means do it, but only if the investment doesn't drill a deep hole in your gaming budget. More to this, Windows 98's demands are higher than Windows 95 and you might want to invest in some more RAM if you're keen to upgrade. A 32M machine should run nicely with Windows 98, but anything less is questionable.

Will Windows 98 help you get nearer to the UGE? Yes, a little bit. Is it worth the cost to do so? It all depends on whether your gaming desire is deeper than your wallet...

Ashton Mills





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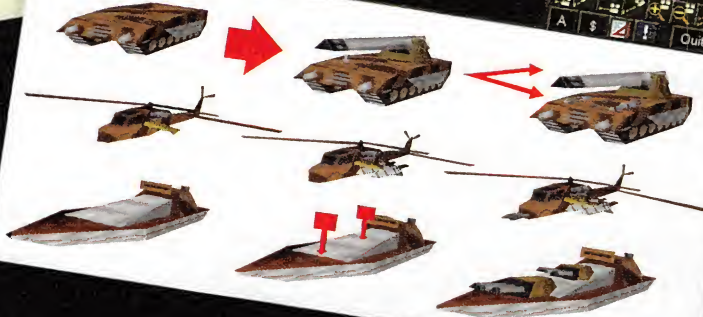
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# The Great 3D SWINDLE

**3D accelerators are now more powerful than CPUs, which can't keep up. The CPU Upgrade Cycle is back...**

Once upon a time, 3D acceleration offered a new hope. An era of fast gaming and a supposed end to the 6 monthly processor upgrade cycle. In a retrograde turn of events, though, second generation accelerators have come, not to save us, but to return us to the bondage of processor dependence again.

By placing a heavier reliance on the CPU to mathematically generate the scene, the 3D accelerator has literally become an oxymoron. Perhaps these allegations are a little harsh, but what's happening in the world of 3D accelerators is that they're dramatically surpassing the ability of the CPU.

To explain what's occurring, it's necessary to look at how a 3D accelerator works. Despite my above statement, the term 3D accelerators has always been an oxymoron, because a 3D accelerator doesn't actually accelerate Cartesian 3D. Considering most accelerators only have a Z-buffer they're actually only accelerating calculations in one dimension; the Z axis.

## How does a 3D accelerator work?

The way a 3D accelerator makes a PC run 3D games faster is actually in its 2D operations, with texturing and shading. To better understand how this works, load up a 3D

game and turn hardware acceleration off. Now run it with every feature turned on.

Unless you have a super fast P2, you will see a slow frame rate produced from the game as the CPU has to complete all operations. Now, go back into the games settings and start to remove special effects until you have the game at its absolute barest. The result will be

***"a second generation 3D accelerator can 'paint' up to 3 million polygons a second within said scene. The problem being that a Pentium II 350 can only render 1 million polygons a second."***

something visually uninspiring, but with a fast and healthy frame rate.

Viewing the game in this bare-bones mode is precisely how the processor is running when a 3D accelerator is installed in your machine. A 3D accelerator essentially completes all the texturing and lighting effects of the game. Lately this has become complex, because a second generation 3D accelerator can "paint" up to 3 million polygons a second within said scene. The problem being that a Pentium II 350 can only render 1 million polygons a second.

The gripe that we should all have with this is that no matter what second generation 3D accelerator you will buy, they will all be CPU limited and therefore virtually perform the same.



## There's no such thing as free 3D

This reality really set in when we observed Rage's Incoming at Intel running over different P2 processors and with the i740 accelerator. Starting with the Celeron, in every situation the textured explosions were fast, thanks to the i740. However a large number of enemies within the scene would cause the frame rate to drop and the game to become unpleasant.

Progressing through the processors up to the 350, what happened was that when Incoming was completing textured operations such as the shockwave explosion, performed identically to a slower CPU. However, the change in processor meant that more enemies could be processed and still keep the frame rate up.

This demonstration proves that we have literally reverted back to the days when 3D games played the best based on your CPU. 3D accelerators upon their initial arrival gave the gaming masses hope; that maybe for a while, like our console cousins, we could play fast exciting games on an affordable platform and not worry about performance.

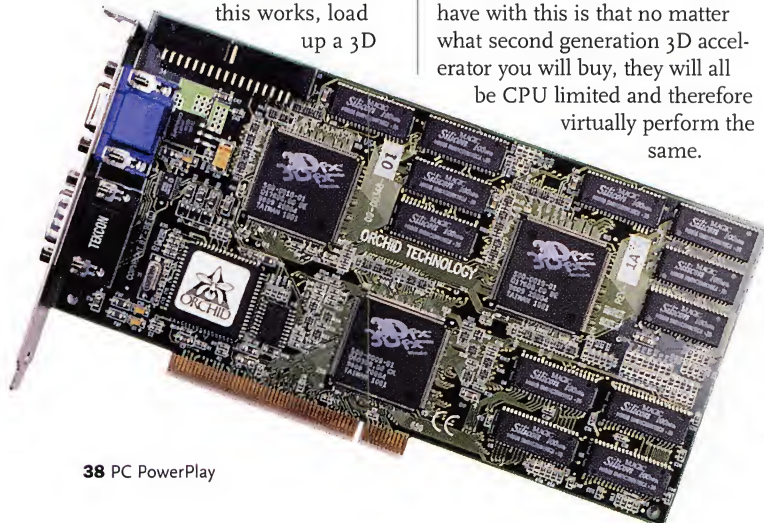
## And the winner is Intel

Had 3D accelerator manufacturers been more forward thinking, instead of just making the current 3D accelerator faster, they would have worked on a way to take a greater geometry load off the CPU. Perhaps by incorporating their own on-board floating point processors.

Not only would this have reduced the need for costly processor upgrades, but would have actually made for a viable performance differential between accelerators. As it stands now, a 2nd generation accelerator that can paint 2 million polygons per seconds (mps) vs a 2nd gen accelerator that can paint 3 mps on a P2 233 will pretty much benchmark the same.

Now sadly, as more gaming companies and their multi million dollar budgets buy the latest and greatest PII's with 2nd gen accelerators and create the next graphically incredible game. We can be cynically safe in the knowledge that only those with the dollars will be able to play it at its full potential. Just like it was 2 years ago, before 3D accelerators emerged.

Jere Lawrence







# Recoil

It's Quake in vehicles, and we're damn glad that's the case!

**W**HILE *QUAKE* IS UNDOUBTEDLY excellent fun, there is something missing in its gloriousness. You are on foot. And as any car owner knows, that isn't as good as sitting in the comfort of your vehicle while polluting the air with your foul carbon monoxide.

Thanks to the great God Ford, then, that in *Recoil* you can blast all manner of computer-controlled drones without leaving your rapid-motion tank. Or should that be your rapid-motion hovercraft? Of amphibious war machine? Or submersible? Because in the future, it has been scientifically proven that we will be driving around in vehicles that can morph into something better suited to the harsh landscape we'll be trying to escape through.

It's when you morph from one vehicle into the other that will guarantee your victory (oh, and killing lots of computer baddies, of course), so that you can get over lava or find your way through large lakes.

The tale is the familiar one of computers taking over the world (so many science fiction writers can't be wrong), and you are one of a group of rebels fighting back, like rebels do. Of particular note, though, is that as a rebel you can do the kind of things rebels do in real life, rather than just relying on shooting the enemy. You can, for instance, knock them into lava, or off the edge of cliffs. Or blow up a bridge as they are crossing it, or knock a rocky outcrop down on top of them.

But if you are of a traditional bent you might be happier with the more familiar method called 'shooting'. It is for this reason that Zipper, the development team behind *Recoil* and the forthcoming *MechWarrior 3*, have

included over 20 weapons, including the slightly unusual sonic burst, arc sabre, high-intensity lasers and guided nuclear weapons. There's also proximity and remote denoted mines, two weapons that have proved remarkably popular on the N64's rather tasty *GoldenEye*.

Such weapons would normally, do fairly major damage to the environment (in a physical rather than invisible sense), so, duly, *Recoil*'s 3D engine is able to alter the landscape, with the creation of craters, and the cunning generation of quicksand traps. The single-player game requires strategic interaction with the 30 levels over six worlds (which can be indoors or outdoors), while the multi-player option allows up to eight people to deathmatch in six specially designed levels.

With a game this stunning, it seems that there are no flies on Zipper, and they're great to hang out with. Sorry.



All manner of fabulous and lethal weapons may well bring *Recoil* up to the level of a comfortably seated *Quake*.



RATING  
TBA

Available August 1998





Fighter Legends

# GAMES WITH ALTITUDE

## The big flight sim roundup

Major Ian test-flies the next-gen combat flight sims



40 PC PowerPlay

**S**trap in, spin the props, turn the rotors or light the burners! We are in for a flight sim extravaganza between now and Christmas that positively oozes stunning 3D graphics, unparalleled realism, additional dimensions in gameplay and new capabilities. Ben collected all the good oil on what's hot and is about to hit the shelves during his recent trip to E3. I have everything he collected; all the glossies and betas... the future looks good! What is more, Microsoft have been kind enough to

loan me a Sidewinder Force Feedback Pro which I have used with betas of MS Flight Combat Sim and European Air War while writing this feature. Start saving your pennies, this is one very good product that lashes out at you with the G forces you'd expect from a hard turn in a WWII sim, and reverberates in your hand as you take a hit or fire the guns. Once the code is perfected to support this product, I'd say we are on the verge of adding a new dimension to pre "fly by wire" simming.





## JETS

### Falcon 4.0

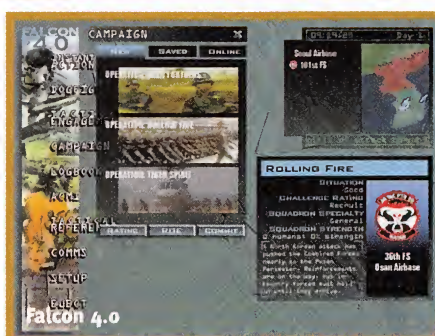
**Publisher:** MicroProse  
**Planned Release Date:** November

**F**alcon 4.0 is shaping up to give us a real "target rich" environment with all the quality gameplay of its predecessors, plenty of scope for add on mission packs and much much more. I've just played the latest beta, and the graphics and gameplay are nothing short of brilliant. In particular, the capable Campaign Manager creates a living, evolving air/land battle environment with thousands of tanks, aircraft, ships and personnel raging war about you.

Falcon 4.0 is set in the Korean peninsula, with a real-time, full-scale war in progress after the North Koreans have jumped the border once again. Players take on the role of a pilot in an F-16 jet fighter and face a variety of air, land and sea missions in three scenarios. The terrain, aircraft, air bases, weapons and other objects are rendered with detailed 3D texture-mapped graphics using digitised aerial photography which includes the full 1,000,000 square kilometres of the Korean Peninsula.

The major differences with Falcon 4.0 are in the graphics department, the aircraft itself and the campaign play. See the screen shots for ground graphics and explosive effects; they are incredible. Swoop down on a troop of enemy tanks and you'll see them disperse, and if you look close enough, their turrets will be moving too! Then dodge the AAA. A tremendous amount of effort has gone into developing both enemy and friendly AI.

The previous versions of Falcon simulated the Falcon A model. In Falcon 4.0 you'll be in the Falcon C Model Block 50 with its new avionics, cockpit layout and powerful AN/APG-58 radar. The AN/APG-58 adds more capability, such as Ground Moving



Microprose are putting the final polish on Falcon 4.0. Its depth and complexity look to surpass classified military training simulators. It may have been a long time coming, but the wait looks like it'll be justified, and then some

Target radar mode that was previously only found in F15Es and JSTARS aircraft. The cockpit is active so you can choose to use the mouse or keystrokes to perform every action.

A significant, but hard to see, change lies within the campaign engine itself. Falcon 4.0 is a real-time game, so destroy a bridge or supply column, and what's left will still be there if you ever come back on a successive mission. What is more, if a bridge is destroyed, the enemy will re-route its traffic to another bridge, so there will be plenty of opportunities for high payoff targets!

Watch out for our Preview then Review later in the year!

## F16 Aggressor

**Publisher:** Virgin Interactive  
**Planned Release Date:** October

**T**his game is shaping up to be Falcon 4.0's main competition and looks like it will get on the shelves first! The developers are General Simulations Incorporated (GSI) who have been developing real-time flight dynamics engines for the US military for the past seven years. Virgin advise that GSI have used their experience to give us an F16 flight engine that has certain "secret military-only" features removed; if this is true then it will be something to look forward to!

The scene is set in the future, and your task as a mercenary pilot will be to support the region's governments against a rebel regional destabilising force. The enemy will have F-15's, SU27's, Cobras and other land and sea platforms such as T-80 tanks and carriers and cruisers! Quite an impressive enemy that comes complete with a realistic world that unfolds beneath you as enemy and friendly ground, air and sea forces manoeuvre, and neutral non-combatants play out their role in life.

F16 Aggressor's leading edge technology is rumoured to be sound and visuals that portray the jarring and G effects of flight in the air battlespace, and a simulated fly by wire flight control system that has the edge over its competitors. I wonder what this brings?

**Gorgeous graphics is Aggressor's forte, with just enough realism to keep Major Ian satisfied. Rumours suggest an advanced realistic physics model and control system**





## MiG Alley

**Publisher:** Rowan Software.

**Planned Release Date:** October.

**M**iG Alley is set in the early stages of the Korean War, and just as it happened at the time, you face off against the Chinese/Russian advisers to the North Koreans seated in their MiG 15's.

MiG Alley's leading edge gameplay is based on the campaign element of the game, set in spring 1951; a period during which the ground war was still fluid and both sides could have won a battlefield victory. As a consequence, the player is under constant pressure from the start. The North Koreans and Chinese will be busy building up their forces and launching attacks aimed at driving you from the Korean peninsula.

You must plan daily missions, maximising the strengths of the various aircraft whilst minimising their weaknesses. Select missions from a wide range of targets and concentrate on attacking enemy troops. Try to cut off their supplies, destroy bridges, and attempt to achieve air superiority.

This sounds like a promising game with plenty of guns and close up missile kills!



## World Air Power: Israeli Air Force

**Publisher:** Jane's Combat Simulations

**Planned Release Date:** November

**A**nice change here with this game modelling an entire airforce, rather than one plane or one era. Seven aircraft through six campaigns will give plenty of in-flight variety as you climb aboard the F4, F15, F16, Kfir, Mirage III and the Israel's next generation fighter the Lavi.

The graphics engine looks pleasing to the eye and time will tell if it has the capability to challenge Falcon and Aggressor. The really impressive element of this game is that it models the avionics, weapon systems and tactics required by the IAF so there will be plenty of NOE flying, radar evasion and coordinated air power assaults.



Developed with assistance from active and retired IAF pilots, this game will be something to look forward to as Christmas approaches.

## Top Gun: Hornet's Nest

**Publisher:** MicroProse

**Planned Release Date:** Christmas/Early 1999

**H**igh fives all around with this game! Maverick returns but this time in a F/A 18. Hornet's Nest will focus more on fun than reality, but hey! that's what gaming is basically about. There's not much available on this game yet other than it will be in a similar flavour to the original Topgun. 30 action packed missions all wrapped within spectacular eye popping special effects and

**MiG Alley's combat will feel very different to other jet-sims. With no radar and mostly gun combat, it'll be pure flying skills that win the fight**

great audio. Air and ground missions, mostly from carrier operations, and the standard multiplayer capabilities that we are used to. Get ready for some "kick butt" flyin'.

## PROPS

## Microsoft Combat Flight Simulator

**Publisher:** Microsoft

**Planned Release Date:** October

**T**his game reminds me a lot of Air Warrior III, except it has better graphics. Like AWIII it is both an online and offline game but I expect that the online aspect will really take off if it is successfully extended to Australia.

The game runs on the MS Flight Simulator engine, so it has proven stability and quality. Eight aircraft including the Spitfire, Messerschmitt 109E, Focke Wulf and Thunderbolt give a lot of variety and each has an individual flight model.

The beta I have flown exhibited photographic quality terrain, and objects were modelled in extensive detail both in the air and on the ground. The high-resolution cockpits really stood out in relation to other







European Air War



Fighter Squadron

WWII flight sims I have flown, and all instruments were faithfully represented and readable. Force feedback added to gameplay by providing force against each movement.

EAW (top) and Fighter Squadron (above) will give us the WWII combat we've been waiting several years for

## European Air War (EAW)

**Publisher:** MicroProse

**Planned Release Date:** October

The air raid sirens will be sounding across Europe again as EAW gives you the chance to be a British, German or American pilot during the Battle of Britain in 1940, and the European air wars of 1943 and 1944.

The graphics engine is detailed and once again 3Dfx reigns supreme; but fear not, D3D will be supported in low resolution. The eye candy here is very similar to Falcon 4.0 and breathtaking efforts have gone into modelling the aircraft. Authentic cockpits and virtual cockpit technology make this game stand out.

The career menu is dynamic with a variety of missions including V-1 hunting, fighter sweeps, escorts, or even ground attacks against moving targets (watch out for those armed



European Air War

This is what Jolt looks like decaffeinated.

Jolt has twice the caffeine for twice the taste.

Gasp! Could we, with our clever visual analogy of an empty glass, be inferring that Jolt has a lot of caffeine? Could we possibly be proud of this fact? If this day and age of political correctness? Damn straight baby.



<http://www.joltcola.com>

a carbonated slap in the face





trains). A morale factor has been included to the career menu; your whole group will flee a dogfight when morale drops to a certain point, so nurture your men and protect them!

The game includes support for force-feed-back joysticks and it was very pleasing to feel the stick shudder in a gun engagement as the enemy burst into flames.

## Fighter Legends: Europe 1944

**Publisher:** Jane's Combat Simulations  
**Planned Release Date:**  
October/November

**W**hite knuckled air combat yet again, with seven aircraft to fly including the Me-262 jet fighter! Wide 3D support to both current and emerging technologies, combined with efficient code appears to be ready to give us the spectacular graphics we expect from Jane's.

Full multiplayer support via LAN and Jane's On-Line Gaming Centre is included, and off line dynamic multi-branching campaigns are shaping up to keep this game on the hard drive for some time. Like many Jane's products it will cater for novice to ace pilots by varying its flight engine and enemy AI. Looking good but not much hard detail on the game as yet.

## Fighter Squadron: The Screamin' Demons Over Europe

**Publisher:** Activision  
**Planned Release Date:** October

**F**ighter Squadron looks very hot. The game oozes quality and what makes it stand apart from other WWII sims is that it is the only one to place you in both fighters and bombers. It also allows you to change positions within an aircraft and to other aircraft within a squadron. This extends to changing positions within a B7 Flying Fortress; woo hoo!



Pilots can fly ten fighters and bombers in Fighter Squadron including the B-17 and Typhoon. Personally I am looking forward to flying the B7 with the Sidewinder Force Feedback Pro. I can't wait to feel the simulated weight of the airframe as the primitive manual avionics throw it about the sky. This game is probably going to dominate the WWII flight sim scene if all these promises come true. I get a beta next week so stay tuned in the next State of Play column.

## HELICOPTERS Apache Havoc

**Publisher:** Empire Interactive  
**Planned Release Date:** October

**A**nother October release! Apache Havoc delivers head to head warfare between the AH-64D Apache Longbow and the Mil-28N Havoc B. In multiplayer games, players can also fly cooperatively or head to head; great work.

The terrain is rugged and covered in dense forest canopy that is penetrated by roads, rivers and lines of electricity pylons. This will make NOE flying and terrain masking a deep-rooted element of gameplay.

Apache Havoc will be fully inter-connectable with its follow-up title, Comanche Hokum, which will feature the US RAH-66

Comanche and the Russian Ka52 Hokum-B scout/attack helicopters.

This game will be a hit with its cooperative and head to head missions, not to mention the prospect of further integration next year.

## Gunship III

**Publisher:** MicroProse  
**Planned Release Date:** April 1999.

**I**'m afraid there's not much on Gunship III as yet, other than it sounds hot! The most exciting feature of this game is that it will integrate with M1 Tank Platoon 2 to enable players of both games to operate in the same virtual world. Digital Integration tried this concept out in Apache and Hind with limited success, and Jane's are planning integrate a number of games in the same way by the end of the year.

Personally, I think we are about to witness new ground in simulation. Real military simulations have not achieved this sort of integration yet, but it won't be the first time that we gamers get to experience new technology before the real users, eg F22s, AH-64Ds and Comanches. True gaming satisfaction will be achieved if you can sit on the same LAN as a friend and call in helo support to your ground attack. At least you'll be able to blame you partner if they fail to support you, rather than swearing at friendly AI!

## On the horizon

October to December is going to be flight simmers' paradise! Which game to buy? Active cockpits, force feedback, bleeding edge graphics and a significant move by many companies to integrate the air, land and sea simulations. With Pentium II and AGP technology beginning to have an impact on game development, one can only drool at the thought of what the next E3 will deliver us.



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# STAT OF PLAY

Coming soon...

## Adventure/RPG

David Wildgoose

Time for a quick update on how this year's most anticipated new releases are coming along. Lucasarts have whetted our appetite with a delicious-looking demo of **Grim Fandango** this month. It's on our demo disc, so have a look at it. Graphically it's drop-dead gorgeous, but opinion is divided about the gameplay. The way Manny's head moves creates a nice visual effect, though how it will translate into a workable and intuitive interface remains to be seen. At this stage, it seems a tad simple to me. Let's hope it hasn't diluted the famed Lucasarts twistedly convoluted puzzle design. The eye-poppingly stunning **Outcast** remains on track for an October release. It's a remarkably ambitious action/adventure epic from the same stable that produced **Alone In**



**The Dark.** Infogrames hope, and I fully expect, that **Outcast** will have a similarly significant impact upon adventure gaming.

Interplay's **Baldur's Gate** appears more impressive with every press-release and new screenshot that comes our way. The promise of several add-on adventures already in development and the prospect of a genuine multiplayer party (ie. non-competitive multiplay - yay!) is incredibly exciting. Equally exciting is the news on **Fallout 2**. Thanks to the decision to simply create a new story around the original game's (slightly tweaked) engine, the post-apocalyptic sequel to one of the best RPGs in years will be with us sometime in 1998.

**Return To Krondor**, from Sierra and based on the Raymond E. Feist novels, is expected sometime before Xmas and should be much better than the lame **Betrayal In Antara**. Eidos have their Diablo-killer **Revenant** also scheduled for a pre-Xmas release, which means it will have to compete with **Diablo 2**. Hmm.

Briefly, **Dark Side of the Moon** is a promising sci-fi adventure from Southpeak Interactive, the makers of the acclaimed-but-never-released-here **Temujin**. **Dragonflight** plunders for inspiration the fantasy series of the same name written by Anne McCaffrey and will be a splendidly 3D RPG romp across the lands of Pern. While our American friend here, Cleve Blakemore, is still beaver away on his pride and joy, the defiantly "old-school" RPG **Grimoire**. At last count he's promising us an astonishing 1000 hours of gameplay! Like **Grim Fandango**, there's a game to literally devote your entire life to.

## Action

George Argy

Current Quake II version: 3.17

Current Unreal version: 2.09

Plenty of news this month, but first the big announcements. iD Software have announced that there will be no **Quake III**. Instead they will produce a multiplayer game called **Quake Arena**. My \$0.02: iD can sit around and claim that **Unreal** had nothing to do with this, but obviously they have realised that they cannot come even close to matching Unreal. So, they're going back to what they know - gameplay. This will also give them back some much needed time to keep working on **Trinity**. Watch this space. A rather disappointing announcement by Epic is that there will be no **Linux Unreal** client, and the Linux Unreal server



is not confirmed. This is bad news for the growth of Unreal as an internet game - as if it's mediocre network/modem play wasn't bad enough, not having a dedicated Linux client means you won't be seeing it at an ISP near you.

Acclaim has announced that **Turok 2: The Seeds of Evil** will feature deathmatch and co-operative play for up to 16 players. It will use a funky engine called RTIME that means better performance for us gamers.

Huge news for real RPG fans (like, those who remember the days when a game consisted of a set of die, a pencil, paper and some imagination) is that Activision is set to produce a 3D role-playing game based on the popular **Vampire: The Masquerade** (et al) universe.

The second most underrated 3D shooter of all time (second only to the great **Terminator: Skynet**), **System Shock** is due to be given the sequel treatment. For the infidels out there, **System Shock** was a 3D shooter produced around the same time as **Doom** that had roleplaying elements, higher resolutions and mouselook.

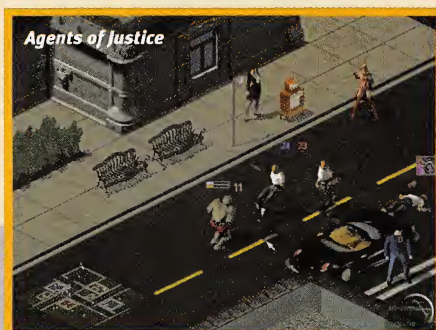
As if games didn't influence popular culture enough (that's not a bad thing), word is that there will be a **Sin** animated movie (think Manga, think Elexis - happy yet?) and a Quake action figure. Think about how much easier a Quake event will be to organise when you just have 20-odd guys sitting around a table with action figures going 'boom, boom'.



## Strategy

Peter Sharpe

It's being called the "Curse of the Superheroes game". It doesn't matter the pedigree of programming talent or generous development budget involved, tie in a superhero theme with a game design and watch potential first rate titles slide into the vapourware abyss. First it was *Indestructibles* from Bullfrog. Touted as a superbeing strategic/action hybrid, all we've seen after a couple of years development is a blurry Quicktime movie. The latest title to be struck down is *Agents of Justice*. X-Com meets Marvel Comics was looking promising but all of a sudden Microprose canned the whole project apparently not happy with its progress. Not only that but the whole Austin Texas studio where the game was being developed was



shutdown. Forget King Tut's curse, breaking mirrors and etching the number of the beast on your forehead.. Superman and his mates are the ultimate in doomed luck.

With *Age of Empires II* only saying hello in 1999, fans will be hanging out for the *Rise of Rome* expansion pack. New units, campaigns and a strong emphasis on ancient Mediterranean hi-jinks should make for some late nights come November. I missed out on playing Age of Empires way back when it was released, only getting hooked recently. This is one RTS game that really stands the test of time.

Another classic game getting an expansion is *Warlords III*. Well not so much of an expansion pack, as *Warlords III Darklords Rising* is a stand alone game. Improved computer opponent AI, four more campaigns and a slab of new maps are amongst the goodies. While it's shaping up as more like Warlords 3.5, just the thought of holding another Warlords night complete with seeing grown men cry over a dead level 6 hero should be worth the price.

A month of strategy can't go by without mentioning Cavedog's latest good deed in securing their love affair with the *Total Annihilation* community. It would be reasonable to expect having to buy the newest TA expansion *Battle Tactics* so as to gain the four new units. Nah forget pure capitalism, just head over to [www.cavedog.com](http://www.cavedog.com) and start downloading. At this rate of Cavedog freebies, wonder what the chances are of TA2 being a free download. Well if Derek Smart can do it with BC3000...

## Sims

Maj. Ian Lindgren

Well it's an "in your face" flight sim month as we approach October! Check out the E3 Flight Sim Round Up for more detail on all the new games I've been raving about for the past few months. Importantly, I have not mentioned Microsoft's *Fighter Ace*, and Novalogic's *F16* and *MiG 29* in the Flight Sim Round Up because they are due out this month. For some reason they have escaped my attention until now.

MS *Fighter Ace* is a WWII dogfighting game. It can support more than 100 players in a single flight arena and features 16 accurately replicated aircraft from the United States, Great Britain, Germany and Russia. Pilots will be able to fly in "free-for-all," private game and team-play modes. It sounds



very challenging, and in the US Microsoft's Internet Gaming Zone at <http://www.zone.com> will provide the server. Microsoft Australia are hoping to obtain a server for Australia, and will be putting in a local interim service as a stepping stone to convincing big brother to fork out the big bucks for Australian users so we get usable ping rates. I'll keep you posted.

Get ready to prove yourself behind the controls of Novalogic's *F-16* and *MiG 29* simulations this month. Each will integrate in Novalogic's Novaworld with up to 100 other players in one battlespace just as you can with *F22 Raptor*. There will also be 40 stand-alone missions, a custom mission design tool, an authentic flight model, fully interactive virtual cockpits and 3Dfx support.

The other big release this month is *Spearhead*, an M1A2 Tank sim. This game focusses on one campaign, a battle in Tunisia against an invading Libyan force. The campaign is in essence linear, and will have approximately 50 missions and I assume a few solo missions. A scenario designer will be included, and the developers have indicated that it will include two dozen or so multiplayer missions of cooperative and head to head style. Good to see!

Outside the tank we can expect strong visuals, including 3D card and AGP support, and force feedback seems very probable for hands on control. Visually, things look pretty good even in the beta; vehicles are detailed, they leave tracks that last for a long time, and tanks explode in a most spectacular manner. I can't wait to see it!

## Online

Gareth Jones

The biggest news to hit the world of online gaming lately has been the American penchant for lawsuits, with two big name development companies coming in for some litigation. The good news is that the *Blizzard/Starcraft* suit has been dropped (see News section this issue), with essentially Blizzard saying 'sorry, we won't do it again', but the bad news is that the case against Origin for *Ultima Online* still seems to be proceeding. UO does have its problems, as anyone who has played would agree, but was a law suit really necessary? I don't think so...

On a vaguely related matter, the hysteria that took over when it was announced that *ICQ* had been taken over by AOL was some-



thing to behold. *ICQ* is still free, and though Mirabilis are still a bit cagey about the future at least for the short term this doesn't seem likely to change. There would have to be a fair amount of chagrin from the industrious people that created and marketed *ICQ* adaptations in the weeks after the AOL announcement. Two of the highest profile offerings, UnMe (pronounced you'n'me) and EGN were initially successful, though it seems to be taking a long while for their service to catch on, and unless *ICQ* does start charging for its services things will probably stay that way.

Other bits and piece-y type news; Microsoft's *Internet Gaming Zone* (IGZ) has secured the rights to feature MicroProse's *Mech Commander* game, though there's still no word on the local IGZ server for Australia. Garry Kasparov, chess Grandmaster extraordinaire, has set up his own site which will feature real time viewing and playing of chess games (and even, it's promised, the opportunity to play the master himself), as well as hints and tips. Check out [www.clubkasparov.com](http://www.clubkasparov.com) for more. Lastly, but definitely not least, is a new online RPG called *Drakkar II*, which looks nice and 'old-school' RPG-ish. As we go to press, it's in open alpha on MPG-Net, and can be downloaded for free

([www.mpgn.com/drakkar2.html](http://www.mpgn.com/drakkar2.html)). It's a hefty 75+ MB download, so go make yourself a cup of coffee or sixty, you'll be waiting a while.



# POWERSLIDE

**Some folks can be very particular about their driving games, but Powerslide should satisfy everyone.**

**Category** Racing  
**Players** 1-at least 8  
**Publisher** Emergent/GTI  
**Available** Nov/Dec

**D**riving games tend to naturally fall in to one of two categories - there are those that go the arcade approach; compromising dynamic realism for fast'n'furious action and non-threatening approachability, while on the other side of the track are the hardcore sims - those which strive for nothing less than absolutely perfect reproduction of Newton's Laws of Computer Driving Sims.

Games which belong in the former category are the Need for Speed series, Motohead and Ubisoft's amusingly, inaccurately named F1 Racing Simulation, while the sim category boasts far fewer games; a result of both the increased development complexity and marketing fools who think this stuff doesn't sell. Grand Prix 2, TOCA Touring Car Championship and anything from Papyrus (Indycar, Nascar) are revered favourites in the sim category.

Each has inherent problems, sims can be damn hard; scaring

off gamers who want instant fun, while the arcade games can become dull very fast, as there's usually not much of a learning curve to explore after the first couple of days.

## All-in-one game

What's needed is a unified theory, of sorts. A racing game where you can apply real-world driving techniques, providing a measure of instant skill, while still opening up a long future of perfecting your technique and line. The other criti-



**Powerslide: it's got it all. An amazingly accurate yet playable, and most importantly, fun game. Awesome!**



for a drive were those that had already had a spin and desperately wanted more.

The short version of Powerslide's appeal is that it looks amazing, feels fantastic to drive and is huge fun, which is all most folks will care about.

## Fastest 3D engine ever!

The secret behind Powerslide's brilliance is that developers Emergent have come up with a 3D engine which, to put it politely, craps on everything else. The "Difference Engine" comfortably outperforms all other 3D engines, including the Quake 2 and Unreal engines. It's capable of generating 5,000 polygons per frame, at 60 frames per second. That's phenomenal - especially so when the game is simultaneously calculating an extremely heavy physics model, which is also far in advance of anything else out there. You won't need an Unreal-class beast of a PC either, for the Difference Engine effortlessly generates this level of performance on a Pentium 133 with a standard Voodoo 1. I've been playing a very early alpha on a 200MMX with a single Voodoo 2 at 800 x 600 - it's mindblowing. Smooth and fast



cal ingredient, which has thus far eluded sim-makers, is that it should, simply, be great fun, too.

Welcome to the future kids, for at last we have such a game.

Powerslide, is what it's called, and it has it all. At this year's E3 there were always huge queues for a drive of the beta. This was partly due to Powerslide's stunning good looks, which drew many inquisitive players, but most waiting





vehicle is a rear-wheel drive, independently suspended 3D object in a true 3D world. Translation: it feels like driving a real car. Come flying off a sand dune, the rear-right wheel lands first, the car veers slightly to the left, you correct with a little right rudder, then both driving wheels bite and the car rockets forward.

#### Slippin' and a slidin'

The name "Powerslide" is more than just your regulation cool-sounding game-name, for power-sliding is what you'll be doing 80% of the time. Beautiful, long, drifting powerslides with some precision throttle-feathering used as the primary means of steering. Damn it feels nice, and the tracks have been designed to take advantage of that. Some canyon passes are a string of sharp turns, which are taken most efficiently by blasting through in a controlled sequence of fishtailing momentum shifts. Just beautiful.

Powerslide's multiplayer mode also delivers salvation to anyone who has tried to enjoy network racing, but gave up because of the "100%, 100% of the time" requirement. It's a hoot and a few spin-offs here and there never mean race-over.

Powerslide is just one of many fantastic new driving games, but it's easily the best. We'll keep a close eye on it, so keep a close eye on these pages.

*Ben Mansill*

like you wouldn't believe, while 1024 x 768 will deliver similar performance if you're equipped with SLI'd Voodoo 2's or a Direct3D compatible card that'll handle that resolution. There is no slow-down, no graphics-intensive parts of the track that hurt the frame rate - it just pumps.

Emergent plan to ship Powerslide with support for both Glide (native 3Dfx) and Direct3D, which means just about any new graphics card.

With this unprecedented power at their disposal, Emergent have gone all out by making the game look better than any previ-

ous 3D driving game - by an order of magnitude. While your average car game will use about 200 polygons for a car, Powerslide delivers 800. Lesser games will show around 500 polygons of track detail, Powerslide manages 3,000! And all this at 60 frames per second! There's absolutely no pop-up of distant terrain and the only flat surfaces in the 3D world are the ones the designers wanted there.

#### Dream driving

The end result of this quantum leap in graphics capability is that Powerslide drives like a

dream. That isn't the end of the story though; port something like Need for Speed to the Powerslide engine and it'll look great, but still drive like a barge on wheels. Herein lies the second half of Powerslide's genius. Emergent went all out developing a physics model second to none. Most driving games use what's known as a "Vector Model", which simply translates your joystick input into a proportionally correct amount of steering - push the envelope past pre-set parameters and the car spins. All very artificial and it feels it. With Powerslide your



# DUNE

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# EARTHSIEGE 3: Starsiege

The continuing evolution of the mech-sim is something to behold. Earthsiege is pushing the genre to new limits

**Category** Mech Sim  
**Players** 1-lots & lots  
**Publisher** Sierra/Dynamix  
**Available** 3rd Qtr'98/1st Qtr's 99

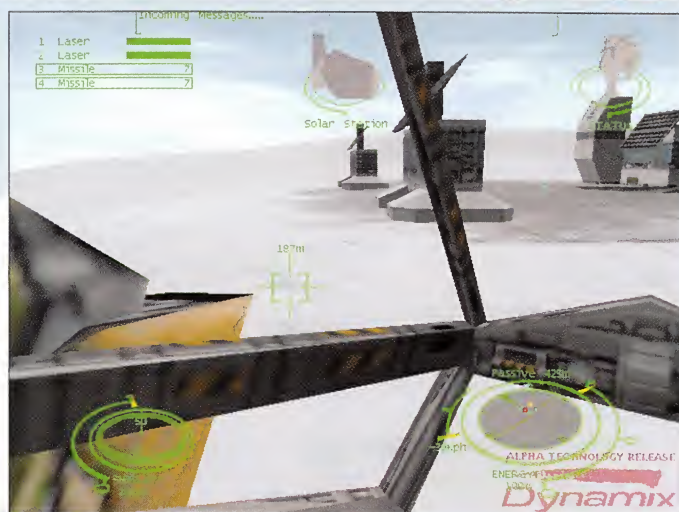
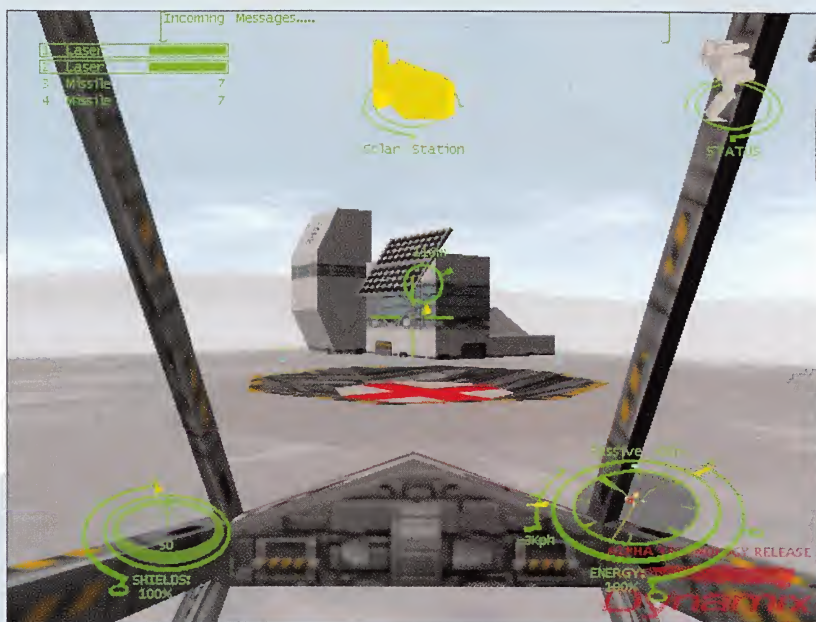
It may seem a trifle hackneyed nowadays, but the premise behind the Earthsiege series is another take on the good old 'man makes machines, machines become self-aware, machines start to kill humans' scenario. However derivative, it is a well developed story, and adds weight to what so far has been a 'promising' series of games. Promising in that they sound good, and aren't bad to play, but they just haven't quite reached the 'great game' level as yet. Starsiege looks poised to change all that however, with its slightly different take on the whole Mech-sim genre.

The most obvious innovation, at least for this genre, is the 'Quake' style control method that seems to be favoured. With many other Mech style games, the games are built mostly for a joystick and keyboard, with the mechs designed to rotate their torsos to shoot at targets to their sides. With the Starsiege mechs, the weapons are placed on independent turrets, so it's much more like a Quake style affair, with keys set up for movement and direction (though not strafing) and the mouse for targeting. From what we've seen so far, it works well, and provides an easy and intuitive way to get into the game if you're not a Mech-sim veteran. You will, of course, be

able to use a joystick if you prefer, and force-feedback will be supported too, along with every other device that conforms to Windows 95 standards.

Though, as with many games of this ilk nowadays, Starsiege is designed from the ground up to be a positive multiplayer experience, there will also be at least 45 single player missions, ranging over a number of different terrain types and planets. There will also be around 30 different Herc's to drive around in, each of which will be highly customisable - even allowing for you to paint your vehicles in whichever way you prefer. The process is much the same as with Quake skins, and presents some interesting opportunities for deathmatch clans, again, a la Quake.

And it's multiplayer where this game looks to be the most interesting and exciting. The amount of players is limited only by bandwidth and server capacity, and once again, as with Quake you will be able to set up your own server as well as use one of the dedicated servers set up on Won.net, so you can expect to see many local servers pop up where there is a demand. Also, included with the game will be a mission editor, for third parties to make maps to help increase the longevity of the game, which is always a nice touch. Graphically, the game is going to look top-notch. Support will be there for OpenGL, native 3Dfx and



The HUD is sparse but functional. The use of a virtual cockpit also adds to the "realism"

Voodoo2, PowerVR and Rendition 3D accelerator cards, and though we've only seen an early alpha technology release the graphics do look to be very clean, crisp and clear.

It's confession time though; I've never really been a big fan of Mech sims, but having played this for a number of hours I'm very excited at the prospect of large scale team deathmatches, as well as the comprehensive story behind the game (an introductory story or two will be included with the game to get you up to speed) which indicates that the single player aspects will be far from ignored too. Keep your eye on <http://www.starsiege.com> for more information and an updated demo version in the near future - I know I will be.

Gareth Jones



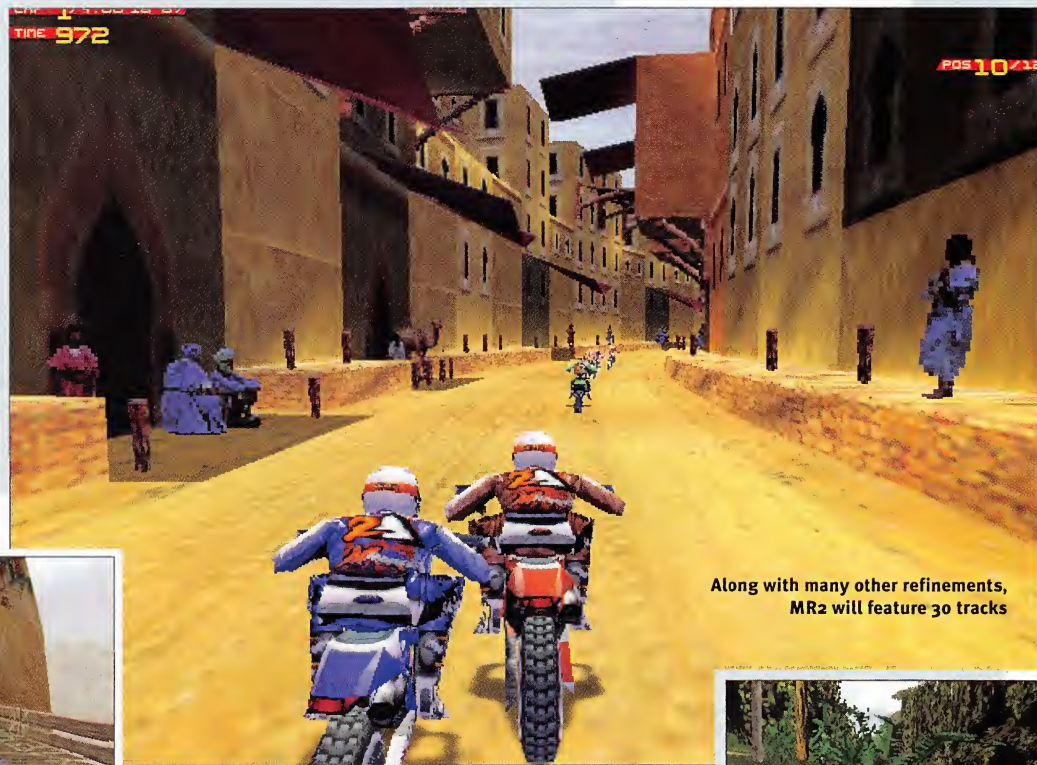


# MOTO RACER 2

The original game was a jaw dropper, back when 3D accelerators were in their infancy. The sequel looks way better

**Category** Motorbike Sim  
**Players** 1-8  
**Publisher** Electronic Arts  
**Available** 3rd Quarter'98

It hit us like a shot out of the dark last year, but Moto Racer was at the time the best arcade-style motorbike racing sim out there. Blindingly fast graphics, balanced gameplay, and great multiplayer action were just some of the facets of this still eminently playable game. As with just about every vaguely successful game nowadays, there has to be a sequel, and Moto Racer 2 should be out in stores by around Christmas time.



Along with many other refinements, MR2 will feature 30 tracks



Though it was a great game, Moto Racer suffered a little in the longevity of play department, because there just weren't quite enough tracks available to make the game a '6 month on the hard drive' title, especially if you weren't blessed with a multiplayer network. This problem area

has been addressed by Delphine for the sequel, with 30 tracks available out of the box, along with another great inclusion - a 3D track creator utility.

As with the original, both street and motocross bikes and tracks will be available, though there will be more options in the gameplay department. Though it was a fast, furious and fun game, MR did definitely lean a little

towards the arcade side of things. With MR2 there will be two modes of play, arcade and simulation. Arcade seems to be a lot like the original - the emphasis on fun and fast gameplay at the expense of realism, but the simulation will apparently be a lot more like real life.

Predictably, the graphics will be jaw dropping, with support for the latest 3D cards (including native Voodoo2), and the inclusion of weather effects like rain,



snow, sandstorms and so on (which will also affect gameplay). With the variety in the ways you can play, the inclusion of the map editor, a full suite of multiplayer options, and the graphics, this is looking like a great game. Look for the full review soon.

## THE CLASSIC REAL-TIME STRATEGY DUNE II REMASTERED FOR THE NEW MILLENIUM



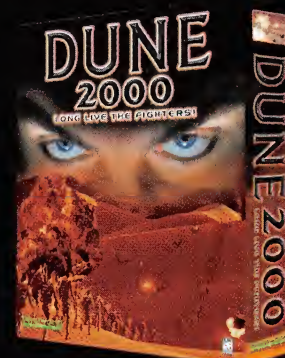
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# CIVILIZATION III

## CALL TO POWER

Regularly acknowledged as one of the great games, Civilization is about to be reborn.

**Category** Strategy  
**Players** 1-8  
**Publisher** Activision  
**Available** 1st Qtr '99

Aside from the official sequel; Civilization II, the Great Game has evolved little since MicroProse's first version. Instead, the style and design of the gameplay has gone on to spawn several excellent variations on the theme: Masters of Magic, Colonization and Master of Orion, to name but the MicroProse clones. Many, many more are out there, courtesy of designers living up to the old "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" routine. But what of Civ itself? We demanded a multi-player version and received, belatedly, the barely adequate CivNet. Now MicroProse are shipping their final hurrah; Civilization 2: Multiplayer, and the lame but we'll love it anyway Civ2 Classic Collection. Hardly pushing the boundaries of potential - especially when the average hit game is expected to run into double-digit sequel territory.

### Which Civ?

Hopefully, Activision will save us all and bring about the revolution in Civilization we needed years ago. They've picked up the rights to Civ and expect to have their new game on the shelves shortly after Christmas.

Provisionally known as Civilization: Call To Power, Activision's game may well end up shipping as just "Call To Power"



52 PC PowerPlay



Graphically, CivIII will be a vast improvement - even though that annoying diagonal interface will still be there



due to legal manoeuvring between Activision and MicroProse. Funny stuff, but the end result is that regardless of its name, this is the next Civilization game.

Meeting with the development team at Activision's shiny new HQ in Los Angeles, I quickly gained the impression that these guys were gamers who

played, loved and respected the original Civ. Fully aware of the importance of staying faithful to the look and feel of the original, the team are equally mindful of the repercussions a half-







hearted effort would lead to. Yes, you do get new units and technologies, but that's just the starting point.

Everyone plays Civ differently, while folks who play it for a long time move between different playing styles. This is the beauty of Civ, and Activision have opened up the game world to dozens of new ways to make, do and destroy things.

### Talking war

For the first time, diplomacy will be an effective tool. The days of old had us steadily feeding our computer enemies obsolete technology to keep them calm. The new game will greatly expand the number and type of actions you can perform while chatting to the boss. The game should also ship with multiplayer support ready to go, here too diplomacy will be more than just a chat screen.

Into the game proper, Activision have invested development time making sure the game is a lot easier to play. They don't mean "dumbed-down", but polished and refined so that the many tiresome chores earlier Civ's imposed on us are no more.

Case in point is the queuing templates. These allow for a predetermined sequence of developments to take place. This applies to both city development and scientific research. The game will ship with several different template types for broad game styles, while you'll be able to create your own based on those hard years of perfecting your structure-sequence. Should a structure or technology not be available when its turn in the queue comes, the next in line will take its place until it's available.

Civ III's timeline will run through to the year 3000AD! Future-tech units, structures and technologies will be as plausible as possible and there'll be none of that annoying, generic "Advanced Tech 4" crap either, everything will have an effect on the game. Nobody played Civ for points, anyway.



### New improved

The new Civ will look much the same. Aside from a cosmetic overhaul, this Civ keeps everything where we expect it, aside from the interface bar, which now runs along the bottom of the screen. Also kept is the diagonal/diamond grid which Civ II used to replace the infinitely more sensible straight up and down, chessboard grid. All in the name of "realism", they say. Hello? This is a turn-based strategy game! Realism we don't need...

The legacy of Sid Meier's creative genius lives on, thanks to the dedication of a small team at Activision. We hope.

*Ben Mansill*





# Urban Assault

**Category** Strategy/Action  
**Players** 1-TBA  
**Publisher** Microsoft  
**Available** Late '98

Software giants Microsoft are really beginning to show that they do, in fact, know games - they have a large and varied array of games slated for release in the near future, and most of them look to be of the highest quality. Urban Assault is one that perhaps walks the line between 'derivative cash-in clone' and 'quality game' a little tightly, but there might be enough polish to push it over the line in the final product.

The deal is that World War 3 has come and gone, along with lashings of wholesale nuclear Armageddon, leaving 6 races vying for control of the remaining wasteland. Presented from the Battlezone-inspired viewpoint, you control your units through screen overlays as well as piloting your own unit on the battlefield. Rather than have the

limited troop options available with Battlezone, with UA you will be able to use the overlay map in much the same way that RTS games use the top down viewpoint. Through the overlay, you can drag select groups of



units, as well as delegate tasks to individuals like scouting, patrolling, and so on.

There will be resource management, in the form of energy towers which need to be taken and held by your troops, so as to be able to expand the reach of your empire. Also, we're promised a diverse range of units, each with weaknesses and

**There's life in the RTS game yet! The strategy elements of Battlezone have been expanded upon, with the same 3D viewpoint**

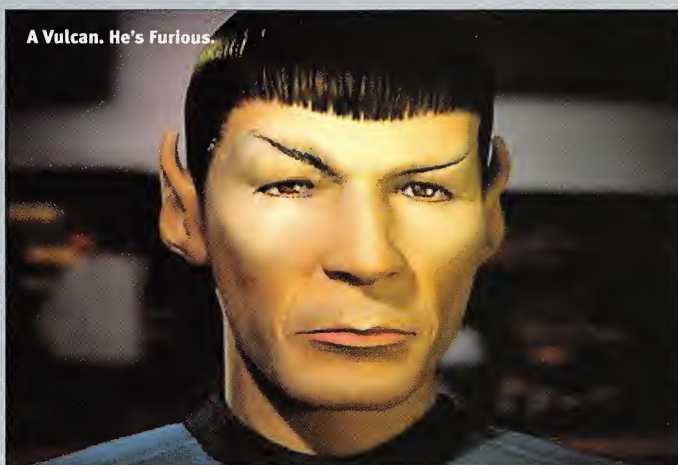
strengths so there won't be one killer unit, or tank rushes a la Red Alert. It looks great, and there certainly is enough promise for this to take the Battlezone-style game to new heights, but we haven't yet had a chance for an extended playtest, so judgement will have to wait until the full review. It's very promising though.

# Star Trek - Secret of Vulcan Fury

**Category** Graphical Adventure  
**Players** 1  
**Publisher** Interplay  
**Available** Early 99

For the Trekkies, apparently one of the most burning questions that has remained unanswered throughout the whole Trek phenomenon has been the mystery behind the split between the Romulans and the otherwise friendly (if rather boring) Vulcans. All anyone really knows is that a couple of thousand years ago the two decided to split, with the Romulans going their own way.

As the plot to ST: SoVF begins, lovable Kirky and his pals are escorting high ranking Romulan emissaries to Vulcan for peace talks, with the hope being that a lasting peace between the two blood-related races would begin. It all goes wrong when Turian, the Romulan ambassador, is found brutally murdered in his room on Vulcan.



And so over the next 6 'episodes' it's up to you to decipher the mystery surrounding his death. You will be controlling, at different times, Kirk, Scotty, Spock, McCoy - who will all be given voice by the original actors. The game characters have all been modelled upon how they looked during the original series, rather than their crinkly selves now. With a story penned by D.C. Fontana, who wrote episodes for

TOS, and some very special graphics this is going to be one to please purist Trek fans - but the big question is whether it will cut it in terms of gameplay.

There have been more than a couple of attempts at ST adventure games, and they have all been a dismal affair. This does look to be a point and click

game with lashings of huge cinematic FMV sequences and a fairly linear storyline. Even so, for Star Trek fans this is one to keep an eye out for sure. As to whether it's going to appeal to adventure game fans generally, well, it's impossible to say until we get to see some gameplay in action. It does look promising though.





# Drakan

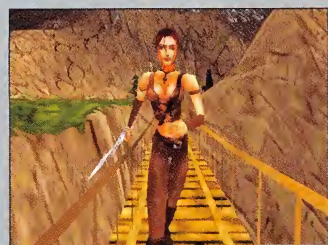
**Category** Action/Adventure  
**Players** 1-8  
**Publisher** Psygnosis  
**Available** Late '98

Even though Psygnosis haven't been at the top of the games development and publishing houses since the heady days of the C64 and the like, they still seem to have a good nose for picking and developing quality games. Drakan, developed by Surreal Software, will require a 3D card and for good reason too. The storyline is that you play as Rynn, a buxom and scantily clad (natch) lass who must fight the evil force that is Kulrik armed only with her sword, her perky breasts, and pet dragon named Arokh.

The game will be played from a third person perspective, and will be a sort of Tomb Raider hybrid. Though this is a game that owes no small debt to Tomb Raider it looks to be much more than just a derivative rip-off. In fact, it would seem to push the



Ahh Lara, where would the world of third person games be without you? Still, our famed heroine never got to ride on the back of a dragon



Lara genre to new levels. Combat will play a large role in the game, a bit like Die By The Sword, though the game will feature plenty of puzzle solving and open area to explore and traverse as well as the usual tunnels and caverns. Along with this, you will also be able to hop on the back of Arokh and fly to your destination - though it won't all be plain sailing up there. Dragons, as any good fantasist knows, have the ability to spew fire from their mouths, and you will be engaging in air to air combat with your

dragon against a variety of creatures, including other dragons.

There will be a smattering of Roleplaying as well, with Rynn's capabilities and personality evolving through the game from a feisty and hotheaded young lass to seasoned adventurer, though it isn't clear if her abilities will develop similarly. The graphics look very impressive, with fully featured 3D terrain and worlds which, when coupled with an intriguing, evolving storyline and a nice variety of combat manoeuvres, makes for a very interesting looking game indeed.

# Beneath

**Category** Adventure  
**Players** 1  
**Publisher** Activision  
**Available** Early-ish '99

Lara Croft has a lot to answer for. Apart from being responsible for many sexual awakenings in young prepubescent nerds (and N64 magazine editors), there have been quite a few knock-off games that attempt to emulate Lara's success, most of which have been very average. Activision have a name for quality that is well deserved however, and they have teamed up with Presto Studios (Journeyman Project 1, 2 & 3) to create Beneath.

So when we hear that they are developing a game along the



"Very funny, Dr Jones!" says Shortround

same lines as Tomb Raider, albeit with an Indiana Jones type character in the lead rather than a buxom lass, then we start to think that this might be one

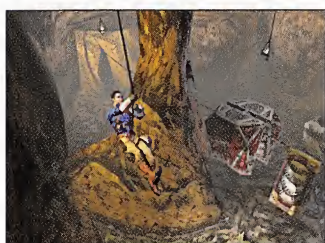
to look out for.

It's still very early stages in the design and development of the game, and going by what was shown at E3 it isn't really fair to judge Beneath just yet. However, the basic tenets of the Lara-style genre (can we just call it the Lara genre?) seem to be in place. A large sprawling cavern underneath the Arctic is the setting for the game, and the usual array of combat techniques will be available (along with a few enhance-

ments, so we're told).

Activision are saying that the movement and combat system will be very useable and flexible, unlike TR1 and 2, along with a much more developed storyline told in cut scenes as you progress through the game. Also, you will be able to interact with NPC's to obtain information and learn more about

your surrounds, as well as be able to use many of the contraptions scattered about the place like tunnelling machines, mine carts, and so on. Predictably, there will be a great deal of puzzle solving to do along the way, which is either a good or bad thing depending upon your tastes, but with 16 bit graphics and 3D hardware support, Beneath will at least look great. As to whether it plays well, we will let you know shortly.





# The Settlers 3

**Category** God Sim  
**Players** 1-20 (LAN)  
 1-TBA (TCP/IP)  
**Publisher** Blue Byte  
**Available** Late '98

**G**od sims, management sims, management strategy titles, call them what you will - they're making a comeback, and not before time either. Elsewhere in these pages we've previewed a couple of other top quality god sims, and though the Settlers series has taken a slightly different tack it's still a great series, very cute and very playable.

Settlers 3 begins with, appropriately, three Gods. Three naughty Gods, that is. In fact, the God of all Gods has had enough of the naughty Gods' shenanigans and decided that it would be much easier and simpler if there was only one of the minor Gods, so He has stuck all three of them on a world and decided to let them sort it out. You, of course, take the part of one naughty god, set with the

task of taking out the two others, by using your people well and managing your resources.

There will be 3 campaigns in S3, one for the Romans, Asians and Egyptians. Each will have different buildings, different strengths and weaknesses, and different temples to build to appease their gods. Without temples and sacrifices to appease them, the Gods will become angry and send down plagues, floods and the like to remind their subjects just who is boss, which adds an extra element into the Settlers scenarios that wasn't



More of the cute little blue Smurf-like characters - good stuff!



previously present. There will also be more variety in battle units, with archers, spear throwers, axe fighters, and so on.

As those who played earlier incarnations of the Settlers series will know, you can't have an army without a

decent economy though, and that's where most of the gameplay in Settlers 3 will be, as well as most of the fun. Building foresters next to forests, and lumberjacks nearby, as well as storing your refined lumber near expansion areas is just a small part of the management that you will have to provide for your citizens. And going by the pedigree of the Settlers series as well as the noted improvements, this could well be another title that pushes the resurgence of the God Sim one step further along.

# Theocracy

**Category** RTS  
**Players** 1-8 (to be confirmed)  
**Publisher** I-Magic  
**Available** 3rd Qtr '98/  
 1st Qtr '99

**I**t's hard to get excited about the impending release of yet another RTS game, but Interactive Magic have developed a good name for themselves in the strategy genre, with titles such as Seven Kingdoms and Capitalism providing polished and slightly different twist on the genre standards. Theocracy is their latest project, and even

though it's still very early days, this really is looking quite good.

It's set in Ancient Mexico, when the Aztecs reigned supreme. As you would expect, the aim is to build up your civilisation, developing scientifically, militaristically, and geographically. You will have to deal with advancing tribes as well as those pesky Spanish, who want to come over and invade as they did in real life. The standard

facets of the genre would still seem to apply; you accumulate resources, build up your buildings, train up some soldier units and defend your territory while you research new advancements.

There are some quite nifty features



Blowing up enemy units not satisfying enough? Just take them back to your pyramid and sacrifice them!

by your priests). It's not a literal historical simulation though, magic will be a part of the game (most likely tied into god appeasement/human sacrifices), as well as straight combat. Interactive

Magic have shown that they know what it takes to make a very good strategy game with a twist, and Theocracy at this early stage is looking like it's going to do nothing to change that opinion. More soon.

that set Theocracy apart from the many derivative C&C clones out there though. For starters, priests play a large role on the proceedings, as the Aztecs were a religiously based society - including performing live human sacrifices. If you manage to capture an enemy unit, you'll be able to take him up the steps of your pyramid, and chop out his heart to appease your god, which will bring benefits through to your priest and populace, as well as units like Jaguars, and Eagles (trained





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# Age of Wonders

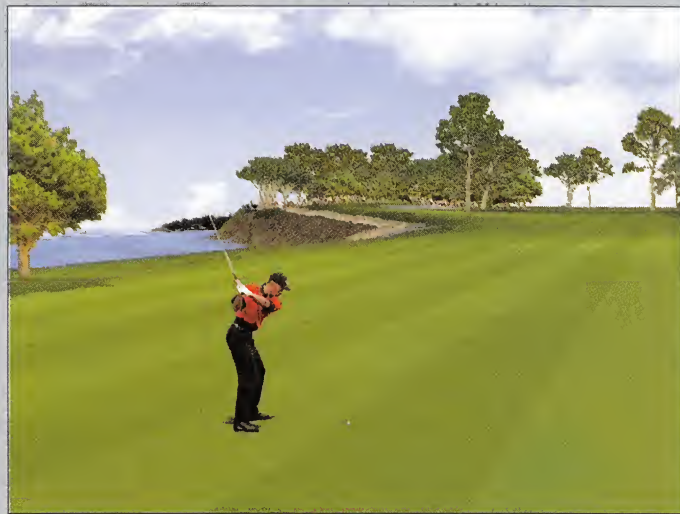
**Category** Turn Based Strategy  
**Players** 1-8 (all forms)  
**Publisher** Epic Megagames  
**Available** "When it's done"

**Y**ou may not have heard much about Age of Wonders, seeing as Epic are also those responsible for Unreal, and the hype (and greatness) of that game overshadows just about everything else at the moment. AoW shouldn't be overlooked though, especially by those who enjoy the turn based strategy genre.

It does bear a striking resemblance to Warlords (from Australian developers SSG), and many of the gameplay elements are common too. However, this is not necessarily a bad thing, as the Warlords series is great, and AoW seems to be much more than just a pale imitation. And they are going to take the time to make sure it's right too - this is another game that's going to be presented to the public "when it's done" and not before.

There will be at least 12 races to play (Orcs, Humans, Goblins, Elves, etc), each with their own abilities, strengths and weaknesses. While it looks like each race will have the same basic units, there will be exclusive units for each. Also, as with Warlords, heroes will play a large part, with the ability to cast spells, wear and use magical items, as well as lead your forces into battle. Your heroes will carry over from scenario to scenario, and you will be able to choose which areas they improve in as they gain experience.

Magic will play a part in the game, and in an interesting twist magic and money will come from the same source. Magical gemstones will function both as sources of magical 'mana' and money to purchase goods and services, so you'll have to decide how to balance your military power with magical abilities. With some very nice graphics, and the promise of real strategic gameplay (as opposed to real time 'strategy'), we'll be keeping an eye on this one for sure.



**Category** Golf Sim  
**Players** 1-200 (estimated)  
**Publisher** EA Sports  
**Available** Late '98

**T**iger Woods, the man who almost single handedly revolutionised the aged and venerable game of golf by a) being black b) being young and c) being really bloody good. Of course, just because one of the best golf players in the world has allowed his name (and Nike's trademark 'swoosh') to be plastered all over the game doesn't necessarily mean that it will be

any good - just ask the Andreotti's. However, when you combine both EA Sports with their long established golf simulation expertise and Tiger, then chances are that you're looking at something quite decent.

It's true that there really isn't that much left to do with Golf Sims - almost every golf sim to come out will feature realistic 3D engines and photo-realistic scenery, along with their own version of the same basic 'power meter' that's been in existence since the dawn of golf sims. All will boast accurate ball physics,

## Tiger Woods 99

at least most will feature a group of professional golf players to play as or against, and woe betide the sim that doesn't offer multiplayer in every facet available.

Tiger Woods 99 offers all these features, and more. EA Sports' commitment towards realism in their games means that, as with the PGA series, realistic courses will be available, with exclusive licenses in many cases, including Pebble Beach, Sawgrass, Summerlin, Bay Hill, and Spanish Bay. Also, rather than just the standard "up to 8 player" multiplayer options, EA are saying that up to 200 people will be able to play in a tournament online, and coupled with this will be the ability to voice-chat to your opponent during play (if you have the necessary hardware). It is, when it all boils down to it, another golf game, but it's

the attention to detail and quality that sets EA products apart from the rest, and Tiger Woods looks to continue in that tradition.

**You can expect to see many instances of the Nike 'Swoosh' all over the game - but EA's commitment to quality should shine through**





# RAILROAD TYCOON 2

Who wants to be a millionaire? I do!



**Category** Railroad Management Strategy Sim  
**Players** 1-32 (provisionally)  
**Publisher** Pop Top Software/G.O.D  
**Available** "When it's done"

Some of the best games of all time have come from the mind of one Sid Meier. His legacy will always be written large on the psyche of any true gamer. It's both good and bad news to hear that there are sequels (or sequels to the sequel in some cases) to his best games. Bad because Sid is no longer involved with these games, but good because the developers are bigtime fans of the original and are determined to retain the 'essence' of what made these games great. Civ 3 is previewed elsewhere in these pages, but the precursor to Civ, one of the first great management strategy titles ever, was Railroad Tycoon.

## Rejected by MicroProse

Pop Top software have secured the rights to produce RR2, and though they aren't one of the best known companies in the industry, they do have a pedigree - they were responsible for



Heroes of Might and Magic 1 and 2. Even though they have been developing RR2 for over a year now, originally it was going to be an unauthorised 'spiritual' sequel to RR, as they did not have the license. However, Microprose were happy to sell the rights to the name, so what was originally going to be named 'Iron Horse' became the official sequel - RR2.

The basic design and goals of the original will remain in RR2, but the interface and options will be refined in many ways. The process of laying the actual railroad tracks will be streamlined, and there will be no need for signal lights to prevent pileups. There will be much more detail to go into in the operational aspects of your trains though, as you will need



**See?! Games don't need to be incredibly violent and mindless! They can simulate monet grubbing materialism too!**

sand towers near hilly terrain so your trains can get enough grip on the tracks, as well as allocating money for maintenance, and so on.

## Wheelin' & Dealin'

Also, rather than have no delineation between you, the player, and your company, RR2 will approach this aspect much differently to before. The player will be a very separate entity, with you able to sell out your original company, or buy someone else's, or merge your company with theirs, and so on. In fact, the financial aspects of being a Railroad Baron will feature heavily in RR2. It will be possible to just concentrate on the stockmarket and appoint an AI manager to take care of the day to day running of your trains and the goods they carry.

Because of the nature of the game, it should be easy to implement large scale multiplayer

options, as there does not need to be as much data sent back and forth as your FPS game, for example. Pop Top are building in many multiplayer options which will work just as well as against AI players which should make the game interesting. You won't have to use your own tracks for your trains this time around, and will be able to lease out other players tracks, though part of the profits for that run will go to the owner of the tracks proportionately (i.e. If the train uses 80% your track and 20% opposition, then 20% of the profits will go to the opposition).

It's a big ask for a sequel to both improve upon an original game of such magnitude as well as retain the essence of what made it great, but Pop Top seem to be doing a great job so far. If it works well, it could be the start of the resurgence of the management strategy sim genre - and about time too, we say! Bring it on!

Gareth Jones





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# Classic Value games, prices

New Releases



first in strategy  
\$29.95 rrp



mission disk to C&C  
\$19.95 rrp



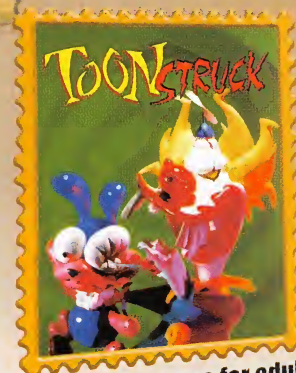
thrilling adventure  
\$19.95 rrp



seriously fun racer  
\$29.95 rrp



horror/action  
\$29.95 rrp



cartoon adventure for adults  
\$19.95 rrp

also available  
Dune 1 & 2, Lands of Lore, 7th Guest, Screamer,  
Player Manager 2, Beneath A Steel Sky and more

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# REVIEWS

## A turn for the worse

**G**o back a few years in gaming history.

Imagine a hypothetical conversation between a couple of PC gamers (a situation fairly remarkable in its own right before the internet and the acceptance of our lifestyle choice by non-gaming civilians, we gamers were insular, solitary creatures). As our social skills are as inadequate now as they were then, the conversation would go something along the lines of:  
**Ernie:** "So, watcha playing?"  
**Bert:** "Leisure Suit Larry, Aces Over Europe and Wing Commander."  
**Ernie:** "Tops, I'm playing a cool strategy game!"  
**Bert:** "You freak! It's losers like you that give us all a bad name! Remove yourself from my sight this instant!"

Fast-forward to today, and strategy is the biggest single genre around. Everyone plays strategy games, everybody loves them. The average family, taking home their first PC, a Packard Bell picked up from Harvey Norman, would invariably have a copy of Red Alert and/or Age of Empires as well, mostly on the advice of the shop assistant.

Quite amazing and entirely unexpected. But are these games really "strategy"? Back in the old days it was all turn-based. Now only your Avalon Hill-style games are turn-based - and they're almost always hex-grid WWII games, which I hate to say, are usually pretty damn dull.

Just as turn-based games were being refined and the genre explored, along came Dune 2. "How cool!" We cried in unison, "what a pleasant and strangely addictive distraction this is!". As it turned out, Dune 2's phenomenal popularity kick-started a string of clones and variations



on the theme which have all but buried turn-based strategy.

I heard someone once say that: "if you lose units because you can't move your mouse fast enough, then it's no longer a strategy game". Very true. Playing a RTS with the speed setting turned down can in fact be a rewarding strategy experience, but log on to Battle.net and the homies play on max speed with their playing style strictly action oriented. So do I, I love it, but it's not strategy gaming anymore.

By Christmas we should have Alpha Centauri, Civilization: Call to Power and Star Trek: Birth of the Federation. All brilliant looking turn-based strategy games. While at E3, when I first saw the especially wonderful Star Trek game I took a deep breath and asked the MicroProse guy if it was real-time or turn-based, when he answered with the latter I almost hugged him. It was a joyous moment, but as to whether these games signal a return to real strategy gaming is too early a call.

In the meantime, turn the page and check out Dune 2000. This is the evil beast rearing its head again to put another boot into turn-based games. Problem is, it's bloody fantastic and I can't stop playing.

**Ben Mansill**  
**Editor and occasional hypocrite.**

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### THE PC POWERPLAY SCORING SYSTEM

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| 95%+   | PLATINUM The Best. Virtually faultless, reserved for games which cause loss of sleep from thinking of nothing else.                    |
| 90-94% | GOLD A classic. Either an unquestionable example of superiority within its genre, or a ground breaking game that'll be setting trends. |
| 80-90% | A strong, eminently playable game. Hard to fault and likely to still be on the hard drive in 6 month's time.                           |
| 60-80% | Competent and generally enjoyable. Flaws or mediocrity hold these games back from higher ratings.                                      |
| 40-60% | Average and ordinary. Not bad, not good. Ideal gift.   |
| 0-40%  | Bad, really bad. Boring, shamelessly unoriginal, cheap and horrible.   |



# DUNE 2000

**Unprecedented and incredibly brave, Westwood re-built a 7 year old game using new technology. A new game it is, then.**

**D**ateline: 1991. PC games were on the verge of breaking into the mainstream. Games which had both universal appeal and magnetic gameplay were rare, but all that was about to change. At the time we were giving it to the Kilrathi in full 16 colour glory, dazzled by the wonders of the infant Sound Blaster. The next 'Quest' from Sierra was a very exciting thing and Geoff Crammond's Grand Prix accounted for what little gaming time we had left. Strategy games were popular and common, but only amongst the gamers which both developers and marketing folk had little love for. At the time, strategy meant turn-based hex-grids, usually recreating historical WWII battles. Strategy just wasn't worth the attention if a publisher was to make a decent buck out of a game.

Dateline: 1AD - After Dune. Finding a gamer who hadn't played Dune 2 through a few dozen times was near impossible. As with only half a dozen games in the history of the media, this game had clearly revolutionised the scene to a huge degree. At



the time we thought that Dune 2's impact was fairly enormous, but if any of us had been given a sneak peek into the crystal ball of

1998, well, only Doom can claim similar influence.

## Birth of a genre

Why? Dune 2 was the first real-time strategy game - or 'RTS', as we've come to know them as. Explaining the

RTS concept to a gamer in 1991 who had never seen Dune 2 would elicit little excitement, but sit them down with the game and it was all very different. Sick days - even holidays were taken. The pain of enduring a working day while fretting over the outcome of some mighty battle you'd spent the night preparing for was just too much. Yes, Dune 2 had the universal appeal and magnetic gameplay needed to make it big, which it did, but it also managed to spawn a whole new genre - a genre that would be just about the biggest there is.

Dateline: 7AD (present day). We affectionately call them "C&C clones", but in reality they are Dune 2 clones. And there are a lot of them. Dozens. A few are good, most are dull. Such is the impact of the game. The hunger for more RTS among gamers is huge and has driven the rapid development of new games. Among them, and wholly unexpected, is Dune 2000.

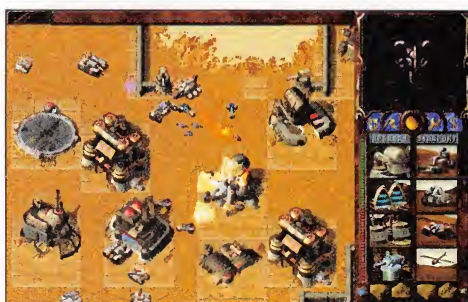


**All the best bits of Dune 2 are retained, with a few useful additions to boot**

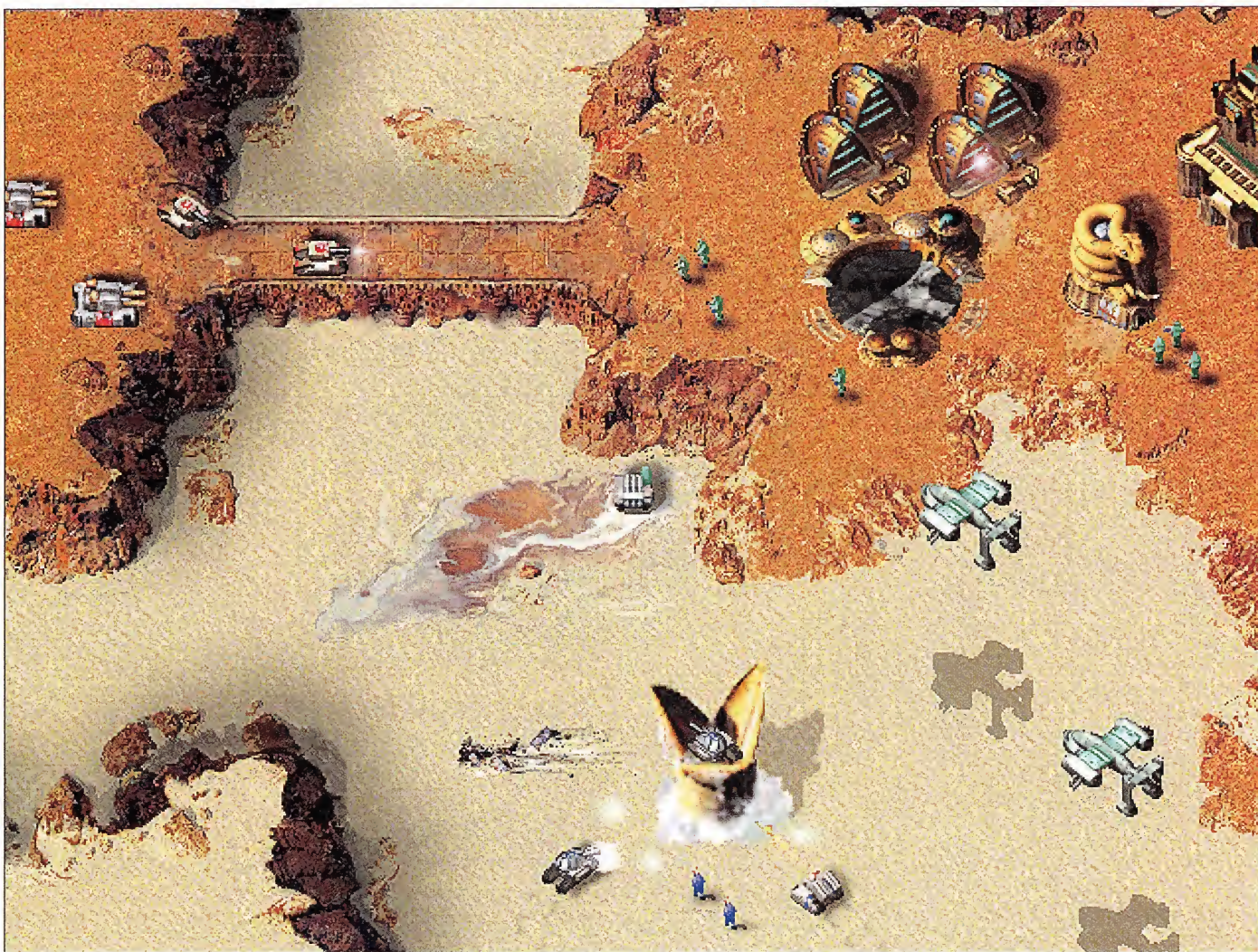
## The new old

The planning meetings for Dune 2000 must have been interesting indeed. Westwood had two options - they could have taken the basic elements of Dune and created a game that would hopefully warm the cockles of our nostalgic hearts, while revamping the lot so it would cut it with new gamers, unexposed to the original. Or, Westwood could re-release Dune 2 verbatim, keeping everything the same, but using new technology to add features we long demanded, but slowly forgot about in the sands of time.

Which is what Westwood did. But, being the exceptionally cool company they are,







Westwood went one step further. There is simply no precedent for what they did: Westwood have recreated Dune 2 from scratch. No single line of code remains from the original. All the missions are virtually identical, all units and their attributes are faithful to the original, structures and their upgrades are the same - even

the wonderful intro sequence has been preserved, but with all-new CG (Computer Graphics) technology. This last bit is particularly heart-warming. At the time the Dune 2 intro was the benchmark for cool CG, we all watched it over and over; it was burnt into our brains. Seeing the new intro is emotional stuff! The classic clichéd scenes are

new and shiny, but the same. Magic.

Of course, the entire project was a big risk from the outset. The temptation to make a different game, using now-accepted RTS standard elements must have been huge. Thankfully, the original Dune 2 was not merely the first, but still holds up as one of the best.

Thankfully, you don't have to build your concrete slabs right next to each other in Dune 2000

There are stark differences between aspects of Dune 2/2000's gameplay and that of current RTS games. Some we were happy to do without, others curiously disappeared from the genre.

#### Quirky idiosyncracies

Two main design elements set Dune 2000 aside from the rest. The first is, of course, the tiles. To build a structure you must first lay down a carpet of concrete tiles for it to sit on. While it's possible to build on the dirt, a building's efficiency and strength-rating suffers as a result. This led to great care being taken with base design, as well as more than a few headaches as resources were inad-





vertently wasted buying tiles that simply weren't used. In the 2000 version, tiles no longer need to be laid adjacently and can now be separated by a regulation-sized square of dirt. Just common sense, really. The other major difference is that only one structure can be built at a time. While it would be easy to dismiss this idiosyncrasy as part of the game's character and charm, it does suck just a little in the face of current, common convention. All building, and really, all non-combat gameplay, takes place in the scrolling menu. Buildings aren't placed initially, with a slow animation showing the construction process, instead you click on what you want and the clock starts ticking, when the building is ready, it's back for another visit to the menu bar to pick up the building and put it down again, on the dirt. This is obviously incredibly inefficient. A new and interesting consideration for RTS players, yes, but a dog of a design nevertheless.

A lesser, but still notable oddity which Dune 2000 possesses



**The Worms! They're back, meaner and greedier than ever. Once again experience that horrible sinking feeling as a fully laden Spice harvester gets swallowed by this leviathan**

is the Sandworm. In keeping with the (truly magnificent) book, these enormous worms wander around under the sand, eating any units or vehicles which pass overhead. It's a feature that made Dune 2/2000 truly unique, but which has disappeared from the modern RTS. Having to keep an eye on your harvesting activities at all times keeps the pace high. Westwood have given us a new unit, the Thumper, which takes advantage of the worm. When set in action, the Thumper will attract a Sandworm, serving two purposes - it keeps the worm away from your precious Harvesters, and if you can be surreptitious enough about it, attract the worm to enemy harvesters.

## Multiplay, hurray

Westwood would have been crucified had they left out multi-player support this time around. It's there in every form you'll need, as is the way with all new games. This is, of course, great news, but I can't help feeling a little sad about all those years I could have been playing multi-player Dune 2...

Dune 2000 is for RTS gamers looking for something

## Before & After

### Dune 2 to Dune 2000



**True to the classic. (left) the original cut scenes and gameplay (right) the new and improved 3D rendered updates**

different. I'll take it as a given that anyone that played the original will get the new-improved version. The opportunity to relive one of the most exciting times in most gamers lives is too strong to resist. You won't be disappointed. Westwood have kept the faith and the 2000 version will give them the nostalgic flashbacks they crave, as well as a new and exciting game experience. Newbies will take it all at face value - we would expect nothing less, and for them too the game that awaits will satisfy.

If there had never been a Dune 2 we would still be pleased and impressed with what's on offer now. Westwood are now putting everything into the incredible Tiberian Sun, but until that's released we have a game with the characteristic charm and balance only Westwood can manage.

Ben Mansill



87%

|                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Category</b>  | Strategy                     |
| <b>Players</b>   | 1-6 (LAN),<br>1-4 (Internet) |
| <b>Publisher</b> | Westwood/Virgin              |
| <b>Price</b>     | \$TBA                        |
| <b>Rating</b>    | TBA                          |
| <b>Available</b> | Now                          |

**For** Relive the wonder years. Top rate RTS in its own right. Restores our faith in Westwood. The worm, baby, the worm.

**Against** Quaint idiosyncrasies wear thin eventually. 640 x 480 graphics look a bit crusty.

**Need** Win 95, P90, 16Mb RAM, 4 x CD, 60Mb HDD

**Want** P133, modem

[illegible]



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\*Jazz Jackrabbit, PC Gamer Arcade Game of the Year, 1994.



# COMMANDOS: Behind Enemy Lines

Go make some good Nazis (ie. dead ones) with this magnetically addictive WWII squad-combat sim.

It was with some trepidation that I entered the nondescript terrace in Earls Court, late on a Saturday afternoon in dreary August of 1941. It was, of course, more than just your usual terrace, and was the central briefing room for the Allied Covert Operations Group.

After a detailed and invasive search of both my papers and body, I was admitted to the inner sanctum, where I came face to face with Colonel Montague Smith, a man who carried himself with an air that bespoke his perceived primacy over minnows like me and my comrades. The first time I met him I had taken an instant disliking to the jowly, bespectacled bastard, and it had gone downhill from there. This was a man who had never faced the enemy on a battlefield - only on his little make believe war board - where he and his cronies plotted the death and destruction of far too many good men for often pointless causes. Not a word was spoken, he simply directed me towards a seat at the back of the room facing a projector screen, where I took in the motley crew of other commandos already seated.

## Natural leader

Jack "The Butcher" O'Hara, a natural leader whose reputation for silently taking out the enemy was legendary; Sam Brooklyn, mechanic, driver, and company wiseacre; Tom "Fireman"

Hancock, pyromaniac extraordinaire, and another two who weren't known to me. Montague Smith knew this, and made some cursory introductions. The shaven headed thug was actually a toff himself, but he seemed to know his business. Sir Francis 'Duke' Wooldridge was his name, apparently a marksman of some repute, and the other was a French Resistance leader, Rene Duchamp, who spoke flawless German and was to be used as an insurgent where necessary in our missions. I was introduced to the two by Montague Smith simply as "Fins", from the Australian colony, a man happier under the water than anywhere else".



installations to "keep them on their toes and make them think that Allied forces were where they weren't". It was our job to be Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines.

## Official Secrets

I'm telling you all this with the

The briefing went pretty much as we had all been expecting. The Krauts were enjoying too many victories, and Allied forces were being pushed back too often and too easily. It was our job to create confusion within the German ranks, to make diversionary attacks on enemy

luxury of hindsight, of course, but over the following 20 missions my comrades and myself carved out a piece of history for ourselves. You won't have read about this in any history book, but we were the group that essentially ended the war. Until now I haven't been allowed to tell you about the technology used to help us because of the Official Secrets Act. The technology was called 'PC Eye in the Sky'.

(below) One of the most entertaining ways of dealing with the Nazi's - shoot an explosive barrel right next to them







Sarge O'Hara was our leader on the ground, but all of us had earphones through which we would receive commands from a shadowy figure that seemed to know every detail of the current mission - where the Germans were, their patrol points, where their line of sight was, whether we should crawl or walk, when we should shoot and when we should use a knife - every single detail of our movements and actions were determined by the spooky voice in our ears. It was drummed into us at training to

obey this voice immediately without question, and we did. It was the only thing that kept us alive out there. We didn't understand it then, but I've done a little digging since the war ended and found out quite a bit - here's what I know;

#### Super-secret weapons

The 'controller' used what we now know as a PC using an interface that presented him with a top down isometric style view. Not only could he zoom in and out at whim, but he could

scroll over the entire mission area to see what the Germans were up to. His commands were relayed to us on the ground instantly, and it was by this method that we were directed through the battlefield. One piece of technology still remains tightly shrouded by those in power, but from what I've been able to gather, the device allowed the controller to make a mark, or 'save' our operations at any point and if things were to go wrong he could easily move time backward to that point. I don't know how, but I'm told by reliable sources that this could happen easily and quickly - and also that our controller made use of this device very often indeed. I'd always thought that we seemed to display an uncanny knowledge of how to time our attacks and movements, almost as if we had practiced them many times before, but when I gained this information the pieces started to fall into place.

From what I hear, some of the later missions were so tough that the controller would be 'saving' and 'reloading' (these were the technical terms, apparently) around 50 times per mission!

**Apart from a few inconsistencies, this is a top game. If a sequel were to be made that addressed the problems, it'd be a PCPP Gold game for sure**

My source told me that this would often occasion a great sense of frustration in our controller, and that at times he was even thrown into a childish rage, threatening to throw the device into the nearest bin and give up altogether. I'm rather pleased that he didn't, of course.

To compound his frustration, his superiors would only allow certain members of my team to use certain devices. I was the only one allowed to use the SCUBA gear, Brooklyn was the only one allowed to drive vehicles, and Duke was only allowed to carry 6 bullets for his Sniper rifle, for example - patently ridiculous, I know, but I was told





## The men that saved the world



**Jack "Butcher" O'Hara**

**Position:** Green Beret

**Sergeant**

**Place of Birth:** Dublin, IL.

**Skills:** Fast, lethal with a knife, can carry barrels and dead bodies.

**Items carried:** Knife, pistol, decoy radio, pick-axe (can bury himself in snow and climb walls using this).



**James "Fins" Blackwood**

**Position:** Marine Diver

**Place of Birth:** Sydney, Aust.

**Skills:** Useful with a knife, swims underwater to avoid detection, can pilot boats.

**Items carried:** Knife, pistol, inflatable raft, harpoon gun, SCUBA gear.



**Samuel Brooklyn**

**Position:** Driver,

machine gunner

**Place of Birth:** Brooklyn, USA

**Skills:** Can drive any vehicle, and can commandeer enemy machine gun posts.

**Items carried:** Pistol, medi-kit, tommy gun.



**Thomas "Fireman" Hancock**

**Position:** Explosives expert

**Place of Birth:** Liverpool, UK

**Skills:** If something needs blowing up, he's your man. Also carries hand grenades and a lethal man trap.

**Items carried:** Pistol, man trap, hand grenades, explosives (timed and remote controlled).



**Sir Francis "Duke" Wooldridge**

**Position:** Sniper

**Place of Birth:** Sheffield, UK

**Skills:** If a target is in his line of sight, he can kill it everytime.

**Items carried:** Pistol, sniper rifle (6 shots per mission).



**Rene "Frenchy" Duchamp**

**Position:** Insurgent

**Place of birth:** Lyon, France

**Skills:** Once dressed as a Nazi, can go anywhere, can distract a German away from their patrol.

**Items carried:** Pistol, German uniform, lethal poison, Medi-kit



that this was enforced by his superiors to make the experience more of an 'entertaining and fun game' - a GAME, would you believe it! This was our lives we were risking, and those in charge just wanted a fun game! In retrospect, our controller did have a more immersive and exciting set of tasks because of this limitation, so I'm told, but even so - if I ever meet one of them in a dark alley...

### Line of sight

The controller did have a rather nice array of options available on his viewing area. He could use up to 6 mini-windows to view us or the German troops at one time, so he always knew what was going on and could track the movements of enemy patrols, and he could see a very pretty rendering of the battlefield with beautifully crafted 3D models of structures too. It wasn't a perfect system though, far from it. He could only see the line of sight of one Nazi at a time, which made it extremely hard for him to plot our movements at some points, and I've been told that it was cumbersome for him to tell us which weapon to use and where to go - he couldn't tell us to run in one direction and shoot at the same time, for example.

Even so, he was given license to use a good variety of actions for us, the Sarge could pick up dead bodies and hide them away from prying eyes, Hancock always carried his trusty bear trap (modified for human victims, of course), and I had my SCUBA kit and inflatable raft for when water was involved, along with plenty more. I'm told that the stress and frustration of the job put our controller into 'early retirement', but he had begun his memoirs, of which I shall close with an excerpt;

"The period of my life when I was in control of the Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines was one of both invigoration and frustration. The interface developed by our scientific boffins did for the most part perform well, and I greatly enjoyed myself. However, I feel that controlling multiple units at the one time was overly cumbersome (though multiplayer games did alleviate this somewhat). Further, my Commandos kept saying the same thing all the time, which annoyed me greatly. And lastly, though the levels were large and often open, there really did only seem to be one way to complete certain missions - a disturbing linearity, unfortunately. Overall though, it was still an exciting and interesting experience, and I would recommend it to anyone with a penchant for thinking coupled with strategic action and movement."

NB: The 'controller' never completed his memoirs. Whilst half way through, he suffered an acute mental breakdown due in no small part to his inability to distinguish reality from fiction. Committed to a mental institution, he now spends his time carving effigies of poodles out of chocolate bars and talking about the German nuclear warhead that nearly changed the course of history.

Gareth Jones



Though it's a 2D game, some of the graphics are truly beautiful, and are authentically detailed. It's almost a shame to blow them up, really

# 82%

**Category** Real-time squad strategy

**Players** 1-4 (TCP/IP)

**Publisher** Eidos/Pyro Studios

**Price** \$TBA

**Rating** TBA

**Available** Now

**For** A diamond in the rough - a great alternative to the usual RTS game even if the execution leaves a little to be desired. Big fun to play, with progressively harder missions. Killing Nazi's is good.

**Against** Becomes very difficult as things go on. Units repeat the same speech over and over again, control method is cumbersome at times, and multiplayer games can become very laggy - even over a network.

**Need** P120, Win 95, 16MB RAM

**Want** P200, 4mb 2D Video Card, 64MB RAM



# An ANCIENT EVIL is stirring

You are visited by the ghost of a great warrior  
who warns you that something evil is afoot.  
You must enter an ancient crypt and using a combination  
of spellcasting and hand-to-hand combat,  
destroy the evil before it is too late.



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# SPEC OPS: RANGER ASSAULT

The flawed U.S version of Spec Ops was re-worked for Australian release. Now it's a bit more fun and a bit less buggy.

**R**epresenting a new genre of third-person real-time military simulations, Spec Ops: Ranger Assault is the first game in a proposed series developed by Zombie Studios. Based on the US Airborne Ranger squadrons, Spec Ops places an emphasis on stealth and strategy in a refreshing departure from the current crop of Rambo-esque action titles.

## Anti-narcoterrorism

Five greatly varied campaigns, each comprised of three missions, form the basis of the game. The missions themselves range from shutting down narcoterrorist operations in the jungles of Colombia to retrieving stolen weapons-grade plutonium in the deserts of Honduras. At your disposal are a dazzling array of weapons including assault rifles, shotguns and grenade launchers. In addition to firearms, your Rangers are equipped with other nefarious

devices like satchel charges; explosive packs capable of raz-ing meth labs and demolishing SCUD launchers with ease.

Preceding each of the missions are briefings that are nothing short of ingenious. Using only still photographs and a militaristic soundtrack, Zombie have put together a package of briefings that are simplistic, but capture the mood of a military operation perfectly.

Rangers are deployed in teams of two with the second Ranger under the control of the computer. Your accomplice is able to dispatch enemy soldiers with ruthless efficiency, but AI and path problems severely hinder any attempt at a team effort.



The act of killing another human being has almost never seemed so realistic. Watch with glee as your foes roll around in agony and attempt to squash their intestines back in!

Ranger 2 frequently gets stuck behind trees and other obstructions leaving him vulnerable to attack and you without backup in a fire fight. These problems defeat the purpose of two man teams and make it a lot more difficult to successfully complete missions.

## Agonized death throes

The bulk of the game is played from the classic "Tomb Raider" third-person perspective. This was an excellent choice on the part of Zombie, as the perspective offers unparalleled situational awareness. Character movements were perfected using motion capture technology, and this extremely realistic representation of human motor functions is one of the game's highlights. Enemies react to bullet wounds and explosions in a very convincing fashion. In reality, bullets rarely kill instantly and this is the case in Spec Ops. Wounded enemy soldiers occasionally manage to squeeze off a few shots before they expire and often crawl along pathetically or roll about in agonized death throes.

Attaching a scope to a weapon then using it to take out enemy soldiers at a distance is incredibly entertaining, and one

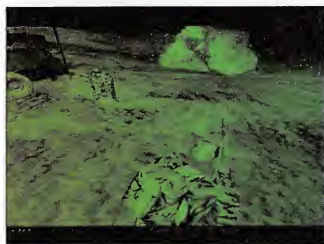
of my favourite strategies. Nothing is more satisfying than squinting through the scope, picking off an unwary guard patrolling the roof of a building, and watching him fall several stories to the ground. As well as standard magnifying scopes, there are night vision scopes for use in low-light conditions. Infra red scopes that pick up heat radiated from engines and bodies are also available and are my personal favourites.

## Navy SEALs, the game

This game's strongest attribute is its immersion factor. Each mission takes place within a true 3D environment that exudes detail and realism. The Afghanistan campaign is particularly notable for its almost total suspension of disbelief. As your Rangers negotiate the urban wastelands, armed conflicts between warring factions occur all around you. Artillery shells and mortars constantly rain







down; gutting buildings and pock-marking the cityscape with smoking craters. Ambient sound effects like distant (and not-so-distant) gunfire also contribute to the feeling of being caught in the middle of an ongoing civil war. In essence, you feel as if you're participating in the Lebanon mission from the movie "Navy SEALs". This striking similarity between the Afghanistan campaign and the movie is a very positive aspect and illustrates how much effort has gone into making Spec Ops a memorable gaming experience.

Spec Ops' visual presentation can only be described as adequate. When compared to titles like Unreal and Forsaken, Spec Ops' graphics look decidedly lackluster; even with 3Dfx acceleration. However, few

will notice this minor deficiency as it is eclipsed completely by the quality of gameplay. Conversely, the aural experience that Spec Ops offers is absolutely brilliant. Weapon sound effects were all recorded at actual Ranger live-fire exercises, and ambient sounds like birds twittering in the jungle foliage give you a very convincing feeling that you're actually there.

#### Bug'n out

As with all games, Spec Ops isn't perfect and several problems detract from the enjoyment of the game. While there is a multitude of firearms to choose from, there is a distinct lack of variety in the performance of each weapon. Automatic assault rifles render the single-shot sniper rifle virtually useless as there's no variation in weapon ranges. Shotguns are frighteningly powerful at close

range, and a bug allows enemy soldiers to rapid-fire them in much the same manner as an M16! The ease with which your Rangers can be killed by these shotgun-toting foes is astonishing and, as a result, missions often take many attempts to complete. There are also collision detection problems, but fortunately these don't hamper the gameplay in any way. Several additional minor annoyances like the lack of a mouse inversion option will hopefully be addressed with patches.

Spec Ops is a pioneering title that has made an extremely successful foray into the world of strategy-oriented action simulations. Known by some as "the thinking man's Quake", it will appeal to those who are looking for something with a little more depth in gameplay.

Brett Robinson

We were forced to wait for this one much longer than the Americans, but the result is a much better, though not quite perfect, game

# 84%

**Category** Action/Strategy  
**Players** 1  
**Publisher** Take Two/GTI  
**Price** \$89.95  
**Rating** M15+  
**Available** Now

**For** Ultra realistic environments and a refreshing emphasis on brains instead of brawn.

**Against** Major AI and path problems with Ranger 2. No multiplayer support.

**Need** P90, 16Mb RAM, 2Mb Video Card

**Want** P166, 32Mb RAM, 4Mb 3Dfx Card

**3D SUPPORT**  
3Dfx Glide, D3D



**PLUS+**

<http://www.specops.org>  
The definitive site for everything from patches to the latest Spec Ops info.



# KKnD 2: Krossfire

**This one's for the RTS die-hards that need a fix. For the connoisseurs though, KKnD 2 just doesn't deliver.**

Imagine that you had been working hard for twelve months or so developing your own real-time strategy game. Warcraft was the main competition when you started the project, but your game was obviously going to be superior in almost every way - of that at least you were sure. As the final release date drew near, you were increasingly confident that your game would blow away any rival. But then disaster struck - and it was called Red Alert.

Consequently, your game - although a perfectly fine title in its own right, unreservedly playable and perhaps the second best real-time strategy game at the time - was invisible in the vast shadow created by Westwood. Accepting your misfortune with grace you immediately head back to begin work on a sequel, determined this time to create something really special. You take on board many of the features now de rigueur within the genre as well as incorporating several new ideas you hope will set you apart from the opposition. But then disaster struck again - and it was called Total Annihilation.

It must be depressing for the makers of KKnD, for example, when things like this happen.

Of course they're not the only ones. Similar tales can be told about the recent Warbreeds, Final Conflict, Cyberstorm 2 and Warwind 2. Such is the lot of the clone, I guess. In the end, unoriginality usually leads to mediocrity. Which is where KKnD 2 comes in.

## Carnivorous mechs

Following on from the great nuclear war during the 21st century that saw the Earth's population almost meet extinction, save for a group of humans who settled underground (known as the Survivors) and the mutated creatures who remained on the surface (the Evolved), the initial scenario of KKnD 2 introduces a third race. Apparently a tribe of carnivorous mech-style robots



**It's like KKnD, but slightly prettier, with a few new bells and whistles. Another sufferer of sequel syndrome**

have also turned up on Earth to claim it for themselves, and that means eliminating both the Survivors and Evolved. Playing as any of the three factions, you are presented with a neatly-designed mission structure vaguely reminiscent of the late, great Syndicate. There's a triangular map and, from your starting point in a corner, you make your way across the land (often choosing between two and three missions) until you have wiped out the enemy.

## Funny bits

One of KKnD's more enjoyable aspects was the tongue-in-cheek mission briefings and I'm pleased to say that they make a welcome return here. I found it was helpful to sit through all briefings at least twice - once to watch the briefing proper on the left half of the screen and once to chuckle at the absurd comments and statistics displayed on the right side. If I was happy to see the briefings had stayed the same, then I was dismayed to discover the actual game itself was mostly identical to the original, too.

Essentially, then, this is a Red Alert clone with a few conces-

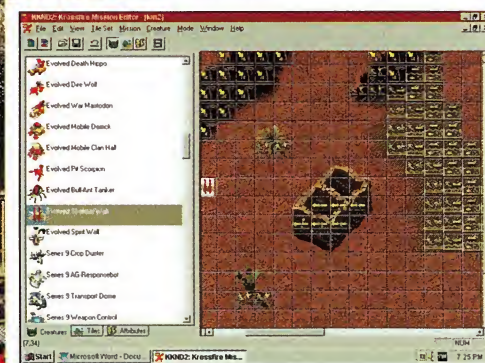




**The unit editor is a very nice touch, but the game just isn't very good, unfortunately**



**The unit editor is a very nice touch, but the game just isn't very good, unfortunately**



a couple of puny infantry blokes  
right into the heart of your base.  
And your own troops possess the  
unfortunate capacity to happily  
stand by while their comrades are  
slaughtered simply because the  
enemy is mere pixels out of  
range. Click-click-click!

New features include a moderately useful map editor and the potentially interesting option to modify units, but these are just diversions. The core of the gameplay is old and uninspired and no amount of added frills will change that.

David Wildgoose



**(Sort of) 3D buildings and the like add some nice eye-candy, but it's all window dressing for an average game**

will send all new troops to a certain point of your choice; book-marking lets you set a hotkey for a particular busy region of the map - that vital bridge or cross-roads, perhaps; and unit orders include guarding, dispersing, standing ground while attacking, etc. All useful and important commands, I'm sure you'll agree. But how much credit does KKnD 2 deserve for implementing ideas up to a year after everybody else? I'll leave that for you to decide.

## Bloody maze-missions!

Mission-wise there's little here that hasn't been seen countless times elsewhere. Most slavishly adhere to the build up base, produce horde of troops, march to enemy base, destroy enemy base routine, right down to the mind-numbing endgame where you shoot defenceless enemy buildings for five or ten minutes until they explode. They've even had the temerity to include not one, but at least three guide-squad-around-maze missions to waste your time. Click-click-click!

Always a crucial part of any real-time strategy game is the pathfinding ability and AI of the units. While your troops will occasionally hinder each other, there is none of the hazardous terrain snagging problems that plague other titles. The AI is a hit-and-miss affair. Outnumbered enemy troops will runaway from a fight, but they'll follow that by sending



sions to the advance of time of the past eighteen months. Thus, we have pretty 2D terrain that has little effect upon battle tactics. Sure, you can shoot down from the top of hills (and not up from

the bottom, I might add), but the trees, buildings, rocks, etc, might as well be anything. Roads improve movement rates, yet you'll need to set detailed waypoints to keep your troops on track if you want to gain the advantage. Click-click-click!

Enhancing the KKnD experience, there are now waypoints, as I mentioned, to map out a specific route for your troops; smart grouping means you can click-and-drag to select a bunch of offensive units without accidentally including, for instance, your oil tanker; production queue orders



|                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Category</b>  | RTS             |
| <b>Players</b>   | 1-Multi         |
| <b>Publisher</b> | Melbourne House |
| <b>Price</b>     | \$TBA           |
| <b>Rating</b>    | TBA             |
| <b>Available</b> | Now             |

**For** Unit and mission editors provide some added depth for those inclined. Improved and more varied graphics. Third race makes things slightly more interesting.

**Against** But it's just the same tired old real-time formula again. A clickfest with shallow and unsubtle strategy.

**Need** Pentium,  
16Mb RAM

**Want** P133, 32Mb RAM



# CYBERSTORM 2: Corporate Wars

Where, oh where, are RTS games heading? Not in the direction Sierra are looking, that's a certainty.

Sierra have this magical touch. Throughout their rather long and decorated career in the computer game developing business, Sierra have brought us some fantastic moments in gaming. I won't bother listing them all, but they've done quite well.

Contrary to popular belief, none of us here at PCPP are anti-Sierra at all. I personally, however, don't tend to get all that excited come sequel time. The reason is this - the magical touch seems to have a bit of an after-effect. It's known as the "Right! We've come up with a gem, where can we go with it now?" curse. A curse (with exceptions of course), around sequel time where the development team tend to lose the plot and make completely silly decisions that don't help the overall quality of the game.

The original was nice...

Case in point is Cyberstorm 2: Corporate Wars. Mid 1996 saw the release of the original Mission

Force: Cyberstorm - a game that came along rather quietly and charmed just about every serious strategy enthusiast at the time. Sure, it was the year of C&C: Red Alert, but for me, as for many others, it was the action strategy title of the year. It blended superb micro management aspects with suitably impressive unit advancement, and added some fairly intense combat that completely hooked the player in. Rather than the throw away-aspect of most strategy games (especially the C&C style ones), Cyberstorm forced the player to really work (and play) like a proper military leader - military units are dang expensive, and losing even one is a severe blow to your force and mission. The player was encouraged to customise and continually upgrade their force, with devastating victories on the battlefield a result.

Gameplay went like this: research new equipment, construct bio-derms (the mech pilots), construct new mechs, link the two, take on missions, earn credits on successful



Whoever said "When you're onto a good thing, stick to it". There aren't many cases where the sequel is better than the original, and a whole host of cases identical to this game's



completion of these and repeat the process. This micro-management aspect carried on to the field of battle also. Rather than scores of units to manage at any given time, it was a handful of units to manage. Each unit was deadly, and whilst in combat, the player could perform a range of tasks to shape the battle. Enemy units attacking from one side? Raise the shields in that direction (at the expense of weaker protection on the blind side). Not enough energy left to finish off an enemy unit? Use the terrain as a defence. There was also a neat feature called Crouch, which resulted in your mech unit hunching up - with a lesser chance to get hit a result. All this of course, was made viable and enjoyable by the turn-based direction Sierra took with the game. Playing much like a game of chess, Cyberstorm



became a hit because it offered an alternative to the fast-action and somewhat shallow offerings of the time in the strategy genre.

Where did it all go wrong?

What to do for a sequel then? First up, it should be mentioned that Corporate Wars is (as the first) set in the Earthsiege universe. This time though, with the main adversaries (Cybrids) out of the way, CW boasts a new story line. Gone is the battle of good versus evil. Now is the time of squabble amongst



The original was really quite good, which makes this even more disappointing than an average game usually is

the victors. With eight corporations of Earth vying for control of the universe's resources, you choose to play as one Corporation and beat the seven others to ensure control of the only jumpgate in the system to allow passage to the other side of the galaxy. Here's the twist: each corporation has advantages and disadvantages. Some have a high level of technology to start off with, but have a fairly low limit of active units allowed at a time in battle. On the flipside, others have strength in numbers but older technology. Overall though, these seem to be balanced quite well to ensure a fairly matched multiplayer challenge.



To make things more interesting, you can now launch attacks on other corporations' bases. As a result, your base must now be fortified with things such as gun turrets, which can also be upgraded when available. Every now and then too, you will be forced to defend your base, so it's a good idea to keep a few of your hard-earned Hercs around the base to defend, for quite often the units away on missions won't make it back in time to help protect it.

The other staple of sequel time is to include more of the same. In this case, there are almost double the upgrades and weapons to salivate over, as well as now 27 vehicle chassis' (ranging from the two legged Hercs, the four legged anti-gravity beasts, to tanks). Depth is one thing that isn't lacking off the battlefield.

### It's boring!

On the battlefield is another matter entirely. Missions are

quite similarly structured. This time though, they've answered the call of the masses and included a real time mode of play. All the depth of pre battle management in the first paid off in the ability to precisely guide each and every unit in combat. With real time, they've cropped the ability to raise and lower shields of your herc, as well as other fine-tuning aspects that made all the difference. Instead, you move your units around a la Starcraft and hope they act intelligently enough to survive the battle. Sierra have kept the turn based option in there, but with the lack of fine control experienced, the game loses its sheen entirely. Coupled with boring landscapes and out-dated graphics, you begin to wonder why Sierra bothered at all. As a real-timer, the game stinks, and as a turn-based strategy, the game lacks the depth required on the battlefield.

It seems Sierra have one major lesson to learn. That is - you just can't please everybody. With Cyberstorm 2: Corporate

Wars, Sierra aimed to bring the insane depth of Cyberstorm to a sequel, this time in real time. While they've thought of the fans and kept a turn-based option, the inclusion of real time has complicated things to a point of killing the original

charm of the game. Players looking for a worthy sequel will be disappointed, and players looking for a killer turn-based strategy game should go for the original.

March Stepnik

# 68%

**Category** Strategy  
**Players** 1-8  
**Publisher** Sierra/Dynamix  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** M  
**Available** Now

**For** Depth, plenty of it.

**Against** Dated graphics, absolutely shoddy real time play (turn-based plays better). The depth of pre and post combat management all seems pointless with the lack of any real control on the battlefield. The charm of the first Cyberstorm butchered. Yuck.

**Need** P133, 24MB RAM, 50MB HD

**Want** P200, 32MB RAM, 455MB HD



Wars, Sierra aimed to bring the insane depth of Cyberstorm to a sequel, this time in real time. While they've thought of the fans and kept a turn-based option, the inclusion of real time has complicated things to a point of killing the original



# STRATOSPHERE: Conquest of the Skies

We do go on a bit about the lack of originality in games, but this title takes innovation to ridiculously happy extremes.

In recent years, game developers have adopted the infuriating practice of cloning existing titles in an aggressive and transparent quest for financial gratification. As well as adding very little to existing formulae, this increasingly popular trend has become the bane of the gaming community. The practice of cloning has now become so widespread that the only games deserved of more than a cursory glance are those that possess unique and innovative gameplay traits. *Stratosphere: Conquest of the Skies* is one such game.

## Floating rock fortresses

*Stratosphere* is set in the valley kingdom of Tyrmont; where mammoth chunks of floating stone (appropriately known as floatstones) are used as mobile platforms for enormous fortresses. These castles, bristling with weaponry, are the foundation of Tyrmont's defence fleet. Two years ago Governor Andrey Corliss, a great war hero, departed Tyrmont with the bulk of the kingdom's fleet on an exploration mission. After receiving no word from Corliss for over a year, he and his party were presumed dead. Without warning, Corliss returned a year later with a substantially bolstered fleet, and attempted to overthrow Tyrmont's government. The player assumes the role of Soren Raeder, a rookie in Tyrmont's airborne navy, who undertakes the campaign to thwart Corliss and his followers.

## Resource management!

Combining elements of action and Real Time Strategy (RTS),

*Stratosphere's* gameplay is refreshingly unconventional. Before commencing each mission, the player is given a limited quantity of resources with which to construct their fortress. Because of this resource limitation, careful consideration of factors like energy consumption is essential. In addition to defensive and offensive devices such as catapults and walls, there are energy collection structures like windmills and solar panels. Manoeuvring structures like thrust jets and TechnoMagic buildings may also be constructed. This complicated construction process is made substantially easier



thanks to a highly simplified point-and-click interface. Fortress movement is controlled using the cursor keys, and weapons are aimed using the mouse. Using the aiming reticle, specific components of enemy castles and ground structures can be targeted accurately and efficiently. This enables the player to devise strategic methods of destroying enemy castles. Targeting the enemy's weapons will leave them defenceless and destroying their thrust jets will render them immobile.

## Inertia and momentum

The game's physics engine is astoundingly realistic. Many localities, particularly canyons, are affected by strong winds that make navigation difficult as well as hazardous. The weight

of a castle affects its manoeuvrability, and momentum causes large castles to drift before they come to a complete stop. The principles of inertia and momentum can be used to the player's advantage, as ramming enemy castles is an effective means by which to destroy them.

There are several modes of play including Campaign, Single Mission and Multiplayer.

Campaign mode contains 24 missions and allows the player to follow both Raeder's career and important plot developments. Within the



**The premise:** You're the pilot of a stone that floats, and you have to shoot other floating stones. Well, at least it's original

campaign are several training missions which introduce the player to the nuances of castle construction and piloting. Throughout the duration of the campaign, animated cut scenes







keep the player apprised of the events that unfold during the conflict. Mission structures are similar to those found in flight simulations and range from attacking enemy ground installations to escorting dignitaries through hostile territory.

Single Mission is an instant action mode that allows the player to jump straight into one of 10 available missions which have similar objectives to those on offer in the Campaign. Multiplayer mode gives the player the opportunity to participate in

either deathmatch, escort or ground strike missions with up to 3 allies or opponents. Because of the customisable nature of the 10 available multiplayer missions, this mode may be used in a similar fashion to the skirmish option found in many RTS games.

#### Fortress Building Utility

Also included with the game are a Unit Library and a Fortress Building Utility. The Unit Library is a comprehensive outline of every offensive, defensive, manoeuvring, energy and TechnoMagic structure

A pretty, immersive and very enjoyable game, let down by the very high level of difficulty. Still, a very impressive effort, though

in the game. The Fortress Building Utility allows the player to construct custom fortresses for use in Single and Multiplayer missions. These custom designs can be copied to disk or posted on the web for download by other players.

The in-game graphics are acceptable but not spectacular. Fortunately, with 3Dfx acceleration, Stratosphere's visuals improve significantly. Sound quality is unremarkable, but this aspect does not detract from the gameplay in any way.

The game's extreme difficulty is its only drawback, though this may be enough to deter some players from purchasing it. Stratosphere is thoroughly enjoyable, and will be greatly appreciated by those looking for a game with a difference. Unfortunately, this game won't get the attention and recognition it deserves because its publishers have opted not to excessively and unrealistically hype their product. A rare treat that every gamer should experience.

Brett Robinson

**PLUS+**

**STRATOSPHERE**

Check out the game's features, including the Fortress Building Utility, the Unit Library, and the Campaign. Take a look at the game's features, including the Fortress Building Utility, the Unit Library, and the Campaign. Take a look at the game's features, including the Fortress Building Utility, the Unit Library, and the Campaign.

<http://www.ripcordgames.com/games/stratos/index.html>

The official Stratosphere site

**82%**

**Category** Action/RTS  
**Players** 1-4  
**Publisher** Metro Games  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** TBA  
**Available** Now

**For** A fantastic game that's unique in every way.

**Against** Average visuals without 3Dfx and an extremely difficult campaign.

**Need** P133, 32Mb RAM, 2Mb Video Card

**Want** P166, 32Mb RAM, 4Mb 3D Card

#### 3D SUPPORT

3Dfx



# TEAM APACHE

**Looking a bit too arcade for our elitist tastes, Team Apache is actually a real winner! Why? Because Major Ian says so.**

I've watched the development of this game for the past few months, and from the outset I was a little worried that it was going to be an "arcade" game. Not so! This is a simple, but quite captivating sim, with just a few cracks!

## A flight we fancy

The main menu comes up with the standard Instant Action, Training, Combat Missions and Campaign-play. Training is first! Warning, warning... this is no ordinary helo sim. Take the time to go through the very rudimentary training missions just to get the feel of the flight model. It is sooooo smooth! Your copilot gives the tower a call to clear you for take off, engage the rotors, watch them spin up, then apply some collective and you're off the ground. The feeling of absolutely smooth and realistic movement is unreal, but watch the cyclic because this game has no easy flight mode... it's realistic all the way. Pitch forward to increase speed or turn, and you'll fall out of the sky unless you compensate with collective. This is something you'll have to

master, or you'll crash and burn as I did many times!

Once in the chopper, the game simulates a virtual cockpit with helmet mounted sight and this is where the game gets its arcade label; there's no instrumentation to use! It's there, in basic analogue form, but you can't use it. Know how to arm the weapons, switch between them, shift from target to target and you've almost got it done. At first I thought this was poor, but it grew on me and I really liked it! A few more key strokes to learn, such as how to call in artillery and control your wingmen and you are through the learning curve. I locked all the keystrokes into my Thrustmaster programmable joystick/throttle and it was HOTAS all the way!

The Combat Mission Menu is very flexible and lets you select eight stand alone mission types

in either Latvia or Colombia such as search & destroy, deep attack, air assault escort and recovery escort. Further options such as all sorts of weather including rain, fog, incoming storm and even snow are given, so too are a number of difficulty levels. Good work and an entertaining variety of missions.

## Like a real sim!

The Mission Generator then kicks in and you have a simplistic looking, but very powerful mission generation tool. It lets you select



multiple routes for multiple flights, waypoints, speed, heights, action at waypoints and so on. Remarkable, just like a hard core flight sim, and better than many! In fact this tool is used in both the Combat Mission and Campaign Play areas of the game, and gives you complete control of up to six other Apaches in anywhere from one to three flights. This is perfect for selecting a flight to conduct suppression of enemy air defences (SEAD); tell them exactly where and at what time to come in, then you arrive with the rest and complete the mission. Brilliant!

Campaign play is based

**The virtual cockpit's instruments are virtually useless - but who cares when it looks this good! In this game fun wins over realism**

around a UN sponsored force taking on the drug lords in Colombia, or assisting in the restoration of peace in Latvia. Quite credible contingencies, but too limited in number for my total satisfaction. The game takes some well deserved criticism at the campaign main screen; you just sit there and wait, and wait, and wait for the game to tell you that a mission has come through from HQ. I poured a brew and



Far canal, it goes boom





Yummy! Now does this look great or what?!



# 83%

sat on my front verandah waiting for the next mission once! Not quite what you're after in a game. There must be a reason hidden away for it somewhere?

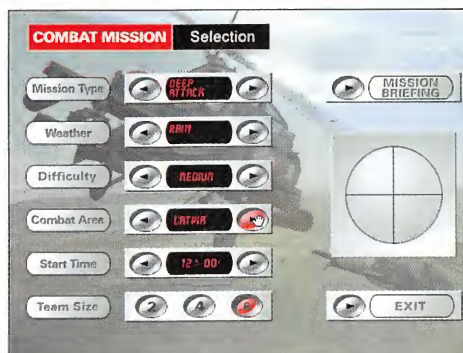
### Coolie hat panning

As for gameplay, woo whooh! The world is alive with moving vehicles and people. Wind will blow you off course, and when you land you'll kick up clouds of dust at times. My coolie hat

smoothly, and you can select many views that really make you situationally aware and add a lot to the fun of the game. Ground graphics are great, you can only target the enemy, but nonetheless it's all there, detailed buildings, trees, roads, bridges and in Colombia, dense rain forest. Using a simple menu you can call up any flight and give them a task. Push them out front, hand off targets and so on.

Graphically, enemy objects are poorish, but well compensated for by great bursts of tracer or missile smoke coming towards you. Hits strike with a bang! The copilot reads off the damage and you lose control of the aircraft accordingly. Good stuff.

It's not Longbow 2, and the interface between you, the



**It's important when creating weapons of mass destruction to give them sexy names. The MPSM Hydra and the Hellfire are great examples**

weapons and the copilot is just like you find in an arcade game. Get over this hurdle and have some fun with Team Apache.

Maj. Ian Lindgren

**Category** Flight Sim  
**Players** 1-8 (Modem, LNA, Internet)  
**Publisher** Mindscape  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** G  
**Available** Now

**For** A fun sim. The sound effects, mission generator and editor are real strengths of this game.

**Against** Something must be done with the campaign main screen, missions must flow to the user quickly. Requires more mission and campaign areas and could do with a beef up in the explosive effects area.

**Need** P166, 32 MB RAM.

**Want** P200 +, 32 MB RAM and 3 Dfx card.

**3D SUPPORT**  
3Dfx Glide, D3D

**PLUS+**

**BOEING**  
AH-64 Apache

The AH-64D Apache Longbow, the next-generation version of the combat-proven AH-64A Apache, and a candidate to fulfil the attack helicopter requirements of armed forces around the world, is in production at The Boeing Company in Mesa, Ariz.

The Apache Longbow's fire control radar and advanced avionics suite give

**Want to learn more about the Apache aircraft? A good start point is the Boeing Apache Home page at <http://www.boeing.com/rotoircraft/military/ah64d/images/ah64do6.htm>. This gives you all the characteristics of the aircraft, where it has been deployed and by whom, and what are its future plans. Really good reading.**



# NEED FOR SPEED III - Hot Pursuit

The latest in the "Looks amazing, but is a bit dull and fake to actually drive" game is here. Bathurst sim please! Anybody!

**T**here is, apparently, within us all a need for speed. The ways we go about satiating this need however, are about as diverse as they can get. My favourite is spending the day with a senior citizens tour group (the type that frequents the local supermarket and shopping mall every Tuesday). The sense of urgency created within is second to none. Then all I have to do is drive home 10kph below the speed limit and I've got a clean, cheap and easy way of getting that rush. Others tend towards conventional methods. The Need for Speed series, whether you love it or hate it, has been providing that rush (you know, hooning about in the car of your dreams, tearing up the landscape) with three incarnations thus far, and with Hot Pursuit, is finally going for the "designed for 3D acceleration" tag.

## Graphic emphasis

Need for Speed III: Hot Pursuit is a bit of stunner in the looks department. Designed with the Voodoo II chipset in mind, the visuals of NFS3 are hot indeed! At times photo realistic, the most noticeable feature of the game is the use of coloured lighting. Not at all tacked on or token, the use of coloured lighting is subtle and careful. Weather effects are spectacular, and NFS3 boasts perhaps the most impressive night driving scenario to date.

The series has always been a bit taxing on the system, and NFS3 is no exception. Running the software-ren-



dered mode on anything less than a Pentium II with 64 MB RAM is a bit pointless. This game was reviewed on a P166 with 32MB RAM, and a Diamond Monster 3D card, with less than pleasing results. With all graphic detail set to off or minimum, the game still chugged along with an abysmal (but bearable) frame rate.

## Oh no! Cops!

Featuring the usual slew of super-cars, game modes and hidden goodies, NFS3 has familiarity on its side. Shipping with 14 super cars, EA have just announced that at least a further 8 cars will be downloadable from the net over the coming months. Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit's greatest advancement however, is the mode that gives the game its name. With Hot Pursuit mode, EA have upped the ante that was introduced in the first NFS. The idea is to race another car on one of the standard tracks, trying to avoid being caught by the people in blue. The fun part is this, rather than a lone squad car trying to



keep up with you, the police of Hot Pursuit are substantially more aggressive. They'll overtake, try to cut you off and block your path. It's a heck of a lot of fun, and with the ability to hear the dispatcher rally all police cars in the area and seeing sometimes up to 4 cars on your tail, Hot Pursuit is that much more frantic and a fantastic addition to the game.

## It's a bit pretend...

Still, NFS has its let-downs. The driving model is still a little too fake to be completely enjoyable. Part of the thrill of speeding down public roads at 220 kph is the knowledge that one bad decision can send your car careening into a tree or cause a pile up that would make the English jealous. In NFS3, clipping a car travelling in the opposite direction at 220 kph results in a little jolt and almost no loss in speed. You can also bounce your way around corners with the speedo remaining steady, which is never a good thing.

March Stepnik

The thrill of driving wildly in toolled up sportscars whilst being chased by the cops is tempered a little by the below par driving model

# 79%

**Category** Driving/Racing  
**Players** 1-TBA  
**Publisher** EA  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** G  
**Available** Now

**For** Hot pursuit mode, stunning courses, nice visuals.

**Against** It's all a bit familiar now. The driving engine hasn't really made any leaps and bounds. While the sense of speed is spot on, the sense of driving a super-car on public roads is lacking. Halfway between being serious fun, and being a little too arcadey.

**Need** With no requirements available at time of press, our guess is nothing less than a P150 with a 3D card.

**Want** PII, 64 MB RAM, Voodoo II card.

**PLUS+**

<http://www.nd4spd.com/nfs3/pc/>  
For news hot off the press regarding NFS3, which counters the lack of a NFS3 site at ea.com

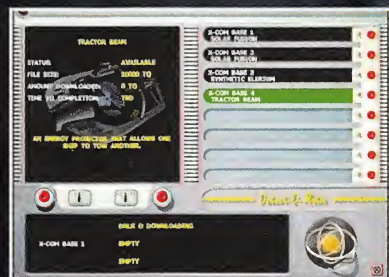




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CD-ROM

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# INTERNATIONAL CRICKET CAPTAIN

**Mark Taylor the best Australian captain ever? Bah! Armchair experts always think they know better. Now there's a game so accurate that you can prove it**

**W**hen you think about it, there are only a few sports games that are particularly well suited to a full scale management sim. Baseball is one obvious choice, due in no small part to the importance (and fascination with) statistics and the history of players and teams. American Grid Iron is similar in some respects, because of the highly tactical nature of the game, and football (proper football, that is) is also quite well suited to the management sim treatment, as shown so wonderfully by the Championship Manager series. The austere game of cricket, though, is perhaps the game best suited to a management sim. It's not exactly a fast paced challenge, even 'pyjama cricket' one day games, and though top level batsmen require lightning fast reflexes and a quick mind, for the most part the game of cricket is a slow and steady tactical affair of move and countermove. Hurrah for ICC then, for they've managed to create a game that both captures the spirit of cricket as well as being an immensely enjoyable game.

## Pedigree

Coming from the same producer as Championship Manager 2, you'd expect a game chock full of stats, with plenty of realism and an attention to detail second to none, all presented with functionality rather than style. Well, you'd be right. ICC contains just about every facet of the real game, realistically depicted in an easy to use and functional way. It's not an action game though, far from it. With the other cricket 'sims' out there, gameplay was focussed more upon waggling a joystick and timing your shots than the intricacies of field place-



ment and strategies against certain opposition players. Wisden, the gods of cricket stats, have given their name and approval to the game, which is a huge recommendation - they've been approached in the past, but have never seen a game which they felt did justice to the game of cricket - up until now, anyway.

With ICC, you don't actually bat or bowl, rather you direct your players as to how they should bat or bowl, as well as place your field, select your team, and decide what tactics to employ. You do get to see the games though, it's not just a text based spreadsheet style affair, it's just that you can only

see the results rather than take part in the action. That's not a criticism however, far from it. With the whole joystick waggling element removed, you can sit back and concentrate on the managerial aspects of this intricate and always challenging game. An extensive database of players and teams is available, so when a new batsman takes the crease you can find out what his strengths are, where he tends to play his shots, what types of bowling he prefers, and adjust your strategy accordingly. Also, if he manages to stay in for a while, you can access a 'scoring wheel' to see where his shots are going, and adjust your field to stop him. Batting is simi-



**Bloody hell! There's only one way to stop this Atherton character - make him captain!**

lar, though you're limited to choosing how aggressive you want your player to be and leaving him to his own devices. Obviously enough, as with the real game, when your side is bowling, you have much more to do.

## The fast forward button

You can also choose how much of the game you want to view, either ball by ball, just the scoring shots, just the boundaries, just the wickets, or just the wickets and chances, or combina-





Boooooonny! Ah, he's the heart and soul of cricket worldwide

**PLUS+**

empire

INTERNATIONAL  
**Cricket Captain**  
WISDEN

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International Cricket Captain Released Available from publishers about 10000

NEW! Download the game with other players in the Internet on a Local Network

New! From Empire Interactive will soon be introducing the BBC's Jonathan Agnew as part of the build-up to the launch of International Cricket Captain. We would like to invite you to visit the site to see the build-up to the launch.

A Playable Demo is now available. Go to the Downloads section for further details.

Welcome

<http://www.empire.co.uk/icc/welcome.htm>

The official page, well worth a look, but also has plenty of cricket links as well.

**91%**

**Category** Cricket Management Sim

**Players** 1

**Publisher** Empire Interactive

**Price** \$TBA

**Rating** TBA

**Available** Now

**For** Real players, real stats, and a 'real' simulation of cricket, as opposed to the arcade games that have preceded it. Also, a nice interface that is both functional and useful.

**Against** Perhaps too many boundaries are scored because of the often inept outfielders. The commentary is perhaps a little repetitive (though as far as sports games go, it's pretty good), and a multi-player option (hot-seat, even) would have been nice.

**Need** P90, 16MB RAM, 2 x CD

**Want** Not much more



tions thereof. It's really quite cool - at the start of a test match, for example, you don't really need to watch the game ball by ball, but in the last five overs of a one day game where you need two wickets and the opposition needs 30 runs to win, each ball is important so that you can analyse what's happening. The graphical depiction of the game isn't spectacular, but it's perfectly serviceable, with players playing a wide variety of shots, and all the usual cricket happenstance occurring (you'll see the occasional French Cut, or perhaps a catch dropped in the slips, or a miscued slog, and so on). It's really quite impressive in how realistic the



games can be, at least in most respects. One quibble I have is with the out fielders - they aren't the best at stopping the ball, and will happily watch it run past them and then trot after it pointlessly. Not a huge gripe, but it's still quite annoying.

#### Accurate Australian content

We've reviewed this game from the initial 'International' release, which only allows you to take control of an English county side, with the possibility of captaining the English side (now there's a challenge!) if things go well for you. However, the version released here will feature all the Sheffield Shield/Mercantile

Mutual Cup teams, as well as the Australian national team (and you are allowed to select the team you want, from any Australian player). ICC also features Jonathan Agnew, the Richie Benaud of English commentary, though it's not clear as to who will be commenting for the Australian version (Bill and Tony? Wouldn't that be fantastic!).

It almost goes without saying that this isn't going to be a game for everyone. Perhaps many of us have become used to twitch games, or action sports sims, but for those that find themselves in the comfy seat on Sunday afternoons watching a test match thinking that they could do better, here's your chance to prove it. This is, quite simply, the best cricket management game you're likely to see for a very long time. It's a bit of a pity it isn't multi-playable - but even so, there's months and months of enjoyment to be had here.

Gareth Jones



# HEXPLORE

**Magnetic gameplay that belies a seemingly simple style. Hexplore dumbs-down RPGing and wins.**

**D**rawing inspiration in equal measures from the classic top-down arcade shooter Gauntlet and recent lightweight action-RPG Diablo, Hexplore compensates for its lack of originality with a healthy dose of sheer addictiveness. Many were the occasions during play when I paused to ask myself exactly why I was enjoying this game. You see, like its forefathers, Hexplore is essentially a simple and repetitive game that succeeds almost despite itself. It's a game that as a whole seems to be greater than the sum of its parts. Hexplore is good, but I don't really know why.



## Black wizard Garkham

Venturing back into the mythology of the Knights Templar that has proved surprisingly fertile ground for adventurous game designers in recent years, Hexplore details the story of a young knight called MacBride. Trekking towards the Middle East with a view to joining the Crusades, MacBride's group of travellers is slaughtered by a band of slaving beasts in the employ of the black wizard Garkham. As the only survivor, MacBride vows to avenge his companions and slay Garkham in the obligatory climactic battle of the game. The story of Garkham's evil deeds gradually unfolds as you progress through the large expanses of medieval Europe and beyond. From time to time you will happen upon a village where you can exchange gossip with the locals or perhaps



a wandering soul will inform you of some danger yet to come. Admittedly, the plot probably isn't what you might call compelling, but it does flesh out the atmosphere with an agreeable sense of drama.

Skilled adventurer that he is, not even MacBride could manage to confront Garkham alone. So, once the game is underway, your first priority is to recruit a couple of fellow fighters, the majority of

which can be found residing in a village not far from the start. Up to three characters from a selection of twelve can join you, yet only one of each class - professional jealousy and all that, no doubt. With any luck then, half an hour later your party of four will include an Adventurer (MacBride), an Archer, a Warrior and a Magician. Each class type has their own unique skill - you'll need your agile Archer to slip

**It's not often that you will hear David crying the praises of an action/RPG hybrid, especially a fairly derivative one, so it must really be quite good**

through secret passages, for example, or your Magician to read the numerous arcane incantations found amongst the dungeons and castles. Likewise, each class is individually kitted out with weapons and armour (battleaxes and maces are favoured by your Warrior, while only your Magician can wield a magic staff, etc), while more general equipment such as potions and gold coins can be carried by everyone. Obviously, these class distinctions don't enter hardcore RPG territory, but are enough to necessitate different tactics for controlling the various members of your party.







Play it co-operatively with three others to see Hexplore at its best, as trying to control four characters at once can be too unwieldy

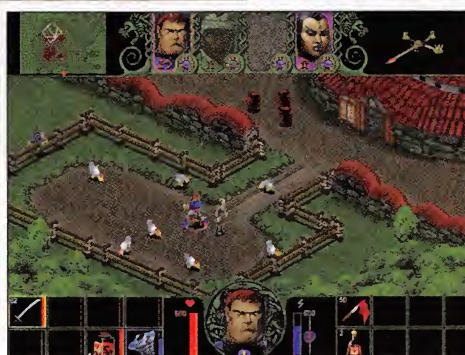
## Behold my magic staff

Exploration and combat provide the mainstays of Hexplore's gameplay and it is here that the Diablo and Gauntlet comparisons are most applicable. This is relatively basic hack'n'slash combat, essentially. The bird's eye view eschews the typical forced isometric perspective by allowing you to smoothly rotate the play area by holding down the right mouse button. Like Diablo, the controls are accessible: left-click on the ground to walk there, left-click on a monster to attack it with whatever weapon you have readied. Melee and ranged weapons are available, though the tactics I found to be most effective indicate a definite bias toward the latter. Throughout much of the game I tended to use one character to scout ahead, pick-

ing off the enemy from distance with my bow or magic staff. One reason for this is that ranged weapons allow you to hit an opponent before it gets the chance to attack you. The other is that controlling one character at a time proved far easier than grappling with all four at once - it gives you the otherwise impractical opportunity to dodge the ranged weapons of the enemy, for a start.

## Needs multiplayer

All of which makes me think that Hexplore is far better suited to co-operative multi-player games than being played just by yourself. It's by no means unplayable as a solo game, but I couldn't help wishing for some human assistance from time to time. Or at least slightly improved computer AI - I mean, how many times would you charge straight at a foe, taking every arrow hit along the



way, before you realised it was a pretty stupid thing to do? Not as often as my companions, I bet.

And yet, despite these troubles, I'm utterly hooked. Developers Helio Visions have concocted a wicked and elusive substance that seeps into your mind as soon as you pop the CD into the drive. So strong is its allure, so intoxicating is its aroma, that you are rendered completely incapable of resisting the slight, subtle and, at times, monotonous charms of this most unassuming of games.

David Wildgoose



**PLUS+**



# 75%

**Category** Action/RPG  
**Players** 1-4  
**Publisher** Infogrames/Ocean  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** M  
**Available** Now

**For** Accessible and addictive fantasy tosh. Stronger than usual storyline for an action-RPG. Visually tempting thanks to the genuinely 3D voxel engine. Highly amusing character voices - done by many of the cast of Twinsen's Odyssey, trivia fans. Add 5% if you can play with some friends.

**Against** The action can feel repetitive after a while. Low-res graphics will disappoint some. Awkward for the solo player to control four characters properly - subtract 5% if you will only play this way.

**Need** P100, 16Mb RAM, 4xCD

**Want** P166, 32Mb RAM, Multi-player capability



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# INDY RACING

Those funny Americans eh! They think turning left 4 times each lap is "Motor Racing"! Ho ho ho...

**H**mm. Yet another American racing simulation where you drive round and round in circles. You'll excuse me, of course, if it sounds like I'm having some difficulty containing my excitement. The fact is no one has yet given me a convincing reason as to why the sports of Indy Car or NASCAR racing should be turned into computer games. I mean, really, have you ever tried to play one of them? Having just spent the weekend with Indy Racing, the entire right side of my body is now suffering cramp from holding the joystick in virtually the same position (forward and a bit to the left) for lap after lap after lap. This is not my idea of fun.

## Mighty midget mode

Okay, let me try to be objective about this. Indy Racing covers several different types of motor racing. I would advise beginning with the Midget class, before progressing through Sprint cars, Silver Crown and finally graduating to the main race, the Indy cars themselves. And then presumably onto Formula One, if you think you're hard enough. Somewhat surprisingly, I found the Midgets to be by far the most enjoyable to drive. Similar in design to karts, the Midgets are the only class that you can really hurl about the track with reckless abandon, especially on the couple of dirt tracks available, and thus the cut and thrust racing you expect in a game only comes to the fore when in this mode. Sadly, the Midget races are the only ones to feel

like a genuine game rather than the dry, exacting simulation of the three other classes.

To be honest, I found it impossible to discern any difference between the Sprint and Silver Crown cars. The tracks you race on are the same, the competition structure identical and the cars handle in comfortably familiar ways. Comparatively, the Indy cars are quite different beasts and will really stretch your powers of concentration as the slightest error or overcorrection can send you spinning into the wall. Not to mention just trying to stay awake as you turn left yet again.



## Need CPU horsepower

Features include a Race School to teach you the basics (and not so basics) of car maintenance and oval track racing, further tips from the experts as you enter the garage to tool around with your car's setup, commentary from a couple of balding blokes who are apparently members of the American ABC Sports team (the Yank version of Murray Walker and Martin Brundle, I suppose), some nice effective replays and a bunch of official tracks (eight for the Indy Championship, five for the three other classes). As with all recent racing games, some sort of 3D card is utterly essential in addition to a seriously quick CPU. Indicative of the grunt needed to get Indy Racing



Oh come on. Who's really going to get excited about turning left four times a lap? Apart from the Americans, that is...

running smoothly, I was still experiencing regular stutters on a P200 with 3Dfx.

Overall, Indy Racing is a competent effort at translating a fairly dull form of motor sport. Both CART Precision Racing and NASCAR Racing have done it better.

David Wildgoose

# 64%

**Category** Driving Sim  
**Players** 1-Multi  
**Publisher** ABC Interactive  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** G  
**Available** Now

**For** Reasonably pretty graphics. Race School delivers some handy advice for setting up your car and improving your performance. Midget class is a real hoot. Boxed with bonus CD for head-to-head racing.

**Against** The lack of variety in the tracks all but kills the game. Accelerate, ease off and turn left. Repeat four times and you've completed a lap.

**Need** P120, 16Mb RAM, 4Mb 3D card

**Want** P233, 32Mb RAM

**3D SUPPORT**

Direct3D

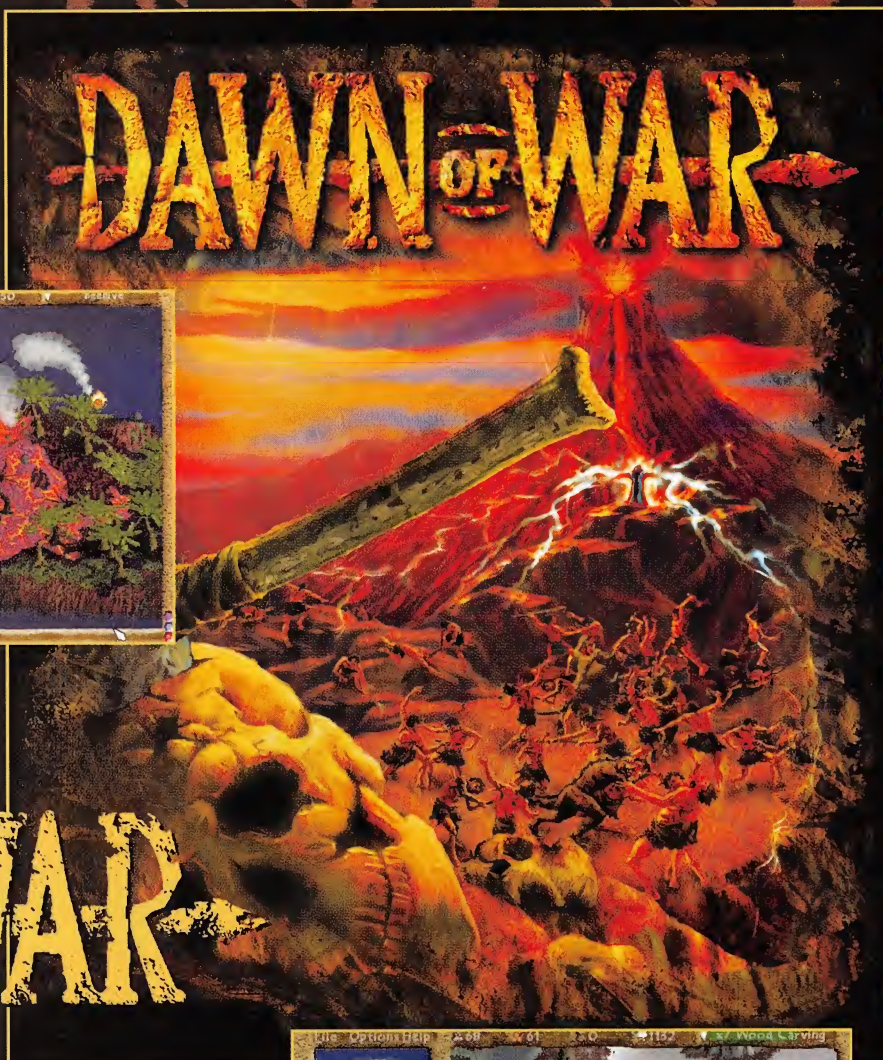
**PLUS+**

**ENERGIZER**

www.li.net/~sandman/indy.html

One of the most comprehensive motor racing pages on the net





# DAWN OF WAR

What do you get if you cross Steven Spielberg with Red Alert? C&C with a beard doesn't bear thinking about.

WHILE IT CAN BE SAID THAT archaeologists' lives are always in ruin (thanks to The Muppet Show for that joke), it is also true that we have plenty to thank them for. Archaeologists' and their history-discovering ilk are responsible, indirectly, for Jurassic Park and the Museums worldwide. And, to an extent, *Dawn of War*.

Y'see, this game, developed by a company called Illusion Machines, has the honour of being the first real-time strategy game set on a fictional prehistoric world. "It's survival of the fittest in an intricate game of primordial warfare," explains producer John Hight in his best sound-bite voice.

The game brings together three distinct and primitive tribes that must battle for control of nature, dinosaurs, hostile terrain and one another. The Cro-Magnons are the brightest of the bunch, while also being pretty nifty on their tootsies. They worship the Storm God, who rewards them with the use of meteor storms and tornadoes against their foe. They are also the only guys capable of building heavy weapons such as catapults.

The Neanderthals on the other hand are strong giants with a grasp on magic. No rabbits from hats from these fellas, though, as they create Stone Golems and volcanoes. Cunningly utilising a third hand, there are also the Saurians, the middle bunch in terms of size, speed and intelligence. They are also the only race capable of breeding dinosaurs, including big film star, the Tyrannosaurus Rex. Their choice of celestial being means that they can bring plagues on their foes, and create an army of the undead.

Uniquely for this style of game, you are able to combine different units to create a new unit. For instance, combining a tar-bearer



with an archer creates an archer with flaming arrows. In addition, you can also selectively breed your army, creating children with more desirable characteristics.

The game is built on top of a complex 3D terrain system, with detailed character animation, smoke, fog, water, dinosaurs, lava, bubbling tar pits, and naturally, an eco-system that throws up the odd natural disaster. Resources are the food available, wood and stone, while each tribesman can be given one of a number of tasks - hunter gatherer, defence, constructor, researcher or magician. You'll find that resources are never plentiful in any of the 30 missions though, so your strategy is of greatest importance.

*Dawn of War* includes support for up to eight players over the Internet or a network, and with a release date just before Christmas, it could conquer the planet longer than the dinosaurs of before. Although that's a very long time.

## Available August 1998



RATING TBA



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# XENOCRACY

**Deep space, pulsing lasers, very nasty aliens and a sleek, futuristic fighter. Yep, it's another Wing Commander clone.**

Every space shooter game has its claim to fame. For the Wing Commander saga it was an ongoing soapie-like story, that had everything from men in big furry cat suits to Mark Hamill flirting with an ex-porn actress. The X-Wing series realised the boyhood dream of us all, battling in the Star Wars universe. (The only missing element being an intimate moment with Princess Leia, shame on thee Lucasarts) Then there is the more recent I-War, a brilliant space sim that breaks away from the arcade roots of its predecessors by introducing real deal physics and a high level of complexity. Xenocracy is a move back to the more traditional arcade joystick waggle in space, but adds some political and resource management to the recipe. Sounds like a good idea for a game.

Humanity in the far future is in a predicament. Sowing our colonial oats throughout the solar system, four main powerblocks have established themselves. The Mercury League, Venus Alliance, Mars Combine and the Earth Dominion. Problem is that these planetary superpowers hate each other. The root cause of this military struggle goes beyond such insults as the Earth president sending the Mercury government a mass consignment of heaters with the message "Warm enough for ya over there?". No, the cause of the bad blood is the thirst for the mineral Lycosite, one of those essentially powerful resources that military forces in computer games have been battling over since the original C&C Tiberium days. Into this mess steps your employer, the United Planet Nations, a peace keeping organisation that doesn't hesitate in kicking some ass to get the job done.



**"The survival of the entire Universe depends on you!"**  
Yeah, right, heard it all before, just gimme some aliens to shoot...



## Familiar territory

Balancing the four superpowers and helping to avoid a Solar War is what the strategy element of Xenocracy is all about. A menu of the solar system updates in between battles with the latest military flashpoints. These range from an Earth attack force heading to attack a Martian Lycosite transport fleet, to being asked to assist the Venusians invade a Mercury mining colony on one of Jupiter's moons. Add pirate attacks into the equation and you can look forward to a very busy time as a UPN pilot. That's your first dilemma, as Xenocracy doesn't allow you to delegate forces to the various simultaneously occurring skirmishes. You can only take on one assignment







Isn't it just great that we've now reached the point where rainbow graphics don't automatically impress! Bring back the gameplay!



at a time which then pisses off the planetary power whose mission you missed. And pissed off they get, withdrawing funds to your peacekeeping forces and at worst case scenario pulling out of the UPN treaty system altogether and so bringing a full blown war that much closer.

To keep the peace, newscasts and political/economical stability graphs have to be monitored so you can help the most peeved planet nation next time around. The designers of Xenocracy have kept this grey matter section of the game well stocked with a fair amount of interesting decision making, such as

tying funding into various weapon research and the choice of wingmen for each scenario. Things could have been taken to a deeper more engrossing level if you could assign other UPN forces into combat hotspots rather than just your

own personal attack wing. Still though, not bad.

## The bad bits

Xenocracy starts to show its cracks when the cockpit action kicks in. There's just no feeling of wanting to shout "Incoming!" or generally get very excited at all. Its not the graphics. They're quite pretty with trippy-hippy coloured organic type ships, with a look straight out of your aquarium. Nor is it the difference of battle environments, consisting of both planets and deep space. The guilty feature is a very dull flight model. The first sin being the complete lack of a sensation of movement. It's like playing from a stationary gun turret, not a sleek high speed fighter. Then there is that damned bouncing effect that took the sheen off Wing Commander Prophecy. Groan as you collide at full speed with enemy ships, usually bouncing away with little damage. Things get quite ridiculous when hitting the ground also results in bouncing away, like all the planets and

moons of our solar system are made out of rubber. Enemy pilot AI isn't that wonderful most of the time, with ships all too often floating around with no sense of a coordinated enemy attack. Sometimes combat felt more like a duck shoot, admittedly a difficult duck shoot when there were lots of enemy ships around.

## The good bits

There are some feel good moments in Xenocracy; flying into a planet's atmosphere whilst chasing down a damaged enemy complete with smoke trail. Tracking down a mother-ship before it beams down tanks into a friendly base also raises the pulse rate just a wee bit. Mind you, to enjoy these graphical delights, you really want a quality 3D accelerator so as to maintain silky framerates. Software render mode was a chug-o-rama slideshow on the local P166 64mb workhorse. On a PII 300, software mode was a lot better, but that's a gimme. An original and often interesting take on the space combat genre, Xenocracy's basic flaws really hold it back from competing with the big boys.

Pete Sharpe



# 68%

**Category** Space combat  
**Players** 1-8 (TCP/IP, LAN, Modem)  
**Publisher** Grolier Interactive  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** M  
**Available** Now

**For** Strategic element of keeping the peace between the planets (plus the element of some mysterious aliens) is a nice background to the joystick action. Arcade mode for those times you just want to see things blow up in space. No game ever the same, as missions are random.

**Against** Sometimes the definition of random is a change in the number of forces attacking generic looking planet number four. Flight model in planetary atmosphere is very reminiscent of that old and crusty game Terminal Velocity.ugh.

**Need** P133, 16Mb RAM, WIN95.

**Want** P166, 32Mb RAM, 3D card

**3D SUPPORT**

3Dfx Glide, D3D



# HOUSE OF THE DEAD

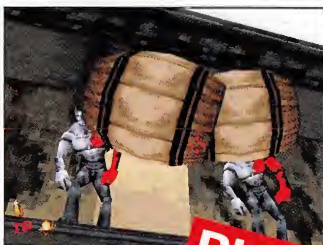
**Too violent for the kids at the arcade, this hasn't survived the transition to the PC very well at all**

**Y**ou may have seen The House Of The Dead at your local arcade, curtailed off from the rest of the place to protect young kiddies from catching a glimpse of its remarkably graphic gore. I had always assumed The House to be the poor cousin of Sega's other first-person on-rails shooter, Virtua Cop. Rather like Mortal Kombat, say, it seemed to be little more than a gimmick in search of a game. And who are the biggest suckers for novelty blood and guts? Those aforementioned kiddies unable to play The House because of its rating, of course.

## The Mysterious G

Robbed of the arcade thrill, of the big screen visuals and screaming sound, of the lightgun controller and the buzzing testosterone atmosphere, this is a game forever unlikely to appear at all comfortable in the home. Truth be told, Sega have managed a reasonably faithful conversion, but the thin gameplay is just not enough to sustain interest in a PC version minus the arcade trappings.

In the Arcade Mode, you are cast as either Thomas Rogan or the mysterious "G", handsomely-tailored AMS agents commissioned to investigate the disappearance of government research scientists at the DBR



**PLUS+**



<http://www.sega.com/spot-light/features/dead/>

94 PC PowerPlay



**Gee, well at least there was a good reason for that curtain at the arcades**

Corporation. Impenetrably-acronymed (Demonic Bodily Recreation, perhaps?) and housed deep within the obligatory haunted mansion, the DBR were engaged in experiments into breeding new artificial lifeforms.

Upon arriving at the gates it becomes pretty clear what the result of such experiments has been. Zombies, killer bats, chain-saw-wielding ogres, mutant frogs and other unspeakable beasts crowd the grounds and corridors of the grand building and await fresh blood. Your ability to put an end to this and rescue the missing scientists is solely dependent upon how quickly you can react. It's a case of "kill or be killed" as you frantically attempt to position the cross-hair over the various vile creatures you encounter.

Presumably as an effort to complicate matters you need to manually reload your gun every time you empty a chamber, but since you also have an unlimited supply of ammo it seems a pointless addition. Not to mention the option that allows for an automatic reload! The craftily-titled PC Mode gives you a choice of character (they have unique guns and hit points) and little else. Although the four other characters are genuinely different, the fact that they are actually characters found elsewhere in the game makes the choice an odd one. Just be prepared for some bizarre doppelganger experiences.

## Open ended gameplay. Not

Progress from one grisly scene to the next is at the mercy of the computer. For so long as you stay alive you will keep



pressing on, following the predefined route through the game and meeting the same monsters in the same locations each time. It's not entirely linear, in that there are several junctures during the five levels at which point your actions (usually whether you kill a certain monster or manage to shoot a button or trapdoor) dictate the route, but the pace is constant and the action repetitive. For me, this only detracts from the atmosphere, since there's no opportunity for generating suspense.

The House Of The Dead surprised me somewhat by being quite good fun for about half an hour. Sadly, the appeal is short-lived and you'll be left wanting something a lot more substantial.

*David Wildgoose*

**59%**

**Category** Shoot 'em up  
**Players** 1-2  
**Publisher** Sega  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** M  
**Available** Now

**For** Not bad for blasting away the day's frustrations.

**Against** Only five levels. Repetitive nature gets old rapidly. Not scary enough either.

**Need** P100, 16Mb RAM

**Want** P133, 32Mb RAM, 3D card

## 3D SUPPORT

3Dfx, RIVA, ATI, Permedia



# ENRICH

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# BIO FREAKS

**On the PC, fighting games are about as successful as platformers. Shame, for there's mighty fun to be had.**

**P**C fighting games have never really gained a foothold as a genre popular with the masses. The sub-standard quality of many titles is partially responsible for the relegation of these games into what is now a niche market. In a brave move on the part of Midway, Bio FREAKS is the next contender in the battle to elevate the status and popularity of the PC fighter.

The game's introductory sequence outlines the plot in great detail. However, there is no discernible connection between the plot and the fighting tournament itself. Eight characters have decided to get together for a bit of a biffy but we don't know why! Creepy.

### 3D arenas

Bio FREAKS has a number of unique characteristics that distinguish it from other titles currently on the market. Primarily, it is one of the only fighting games that contains truly three-dimensional arenas. The arenas themselves are well-designed and can be explored in their entirety. Many also incorporate hazards such as lava pools and crushing rollers into their architecture.

Every character is outfitted with a jet pack that enables them to fly about the arena and a shield device which temporarily minimises any damage inflicted by opponents. These elements add a whole new dimension to the gameplay and increase the game's longevity somewhat.

### Bring on the clowns

Character design is original and the animation

quality is excellent. Characters range from a cybernetic minotaur to a sadistic looking clown who looks decidedly perturbed. My personal favourite is Sabotage; a woman whose alluring physical attributes and snide comments are compelling and entertaining respectively. Attention to detail is astonishing, with different facial expressions evident on the combatants.

Bio FREAKS will have fans of games like Mortal Kombat



**Oodles of gore and decapitations help make this one of the best fighting games for PC**

This game isn't in the same league as titles like Tekken 3 or Virtua Fighter 3, but when compared to the PC fighting games currently available, Bio FREAKS comes out on top.

*Brett Robinson*

salivating at the amount of gore. Opponents can be dismembered and will, provided the wound is not immediately fatal, continue fighting minus one or more limbs! This presents the opportunity for Monty Python-esque battles that are absolutely hilarious! Watching an opponent pathetically attempt to fight with both arms cut off at the shoulder (and blood spurting everywhere) is particularly amusing.

The characters also possess some very cool projectile attacks; with weapons like javelins remaining embedded in the flesh of opponents for the duration of the battle.

### Squelch fighter

The visuals in Bio FREAKS are fantastic and look absolutely spectacular with my Guillemot Maxi3D Voodoo 2. Sound quality is also excellent; with all the usual crunching and squelching noises as well as character comments to liven things up a bit.

Bio FREAKS has a few problems which limit its appeal and longevity. Having only eight characters is a major drawback, and the propensity for fights to degenerate into projectile-throwing matches is extremely annoying. The CPU AI is also vulnerable to repetitive projectile and sweep attacks.



<http://www.midway.com/home/biofreaks/index.html>  
The official Bio FREAKS site

## 72%

**Category** 3D fighting  
**Players** 1-2  
**Publisher** Midway  
**Price** \$TBA  
**Rating** M  
**Available** Now

**For** Some great new features and very pleasing visuals.

**Against** Limited number of characters and questionable AI.

**Need** P100, 16Mb RAM

**Want** P166, 32Mb RAM, 4Mb 3Dfx card



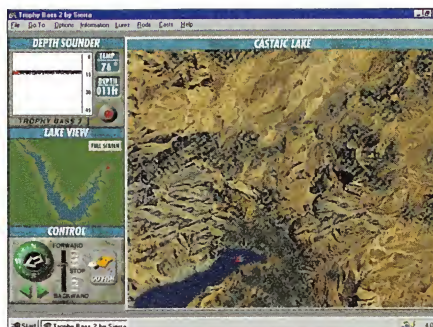
# Trophy Bass Deluxe 2

I was almost convinced halfway through the introduction of Trophy Bass 2 that this could indeed be a completely phenomenal, hair-on-chest inducing, experience. There's something about a group of large, well rounded men cheering over a fishing hero as he enters a massive arena, a pyrotechnics display let loose, with plenty of slimy fish being passed around (and all with a glam-rock soundtrack to boot) that either does it for you, or doesn't.

Let's face it. Fishing is an exciting sport. And to all those at this point disagreeing, well, you just don't understand, do you? If the glitzy introduction sequence doesn't seem exciting enough, how about this then? You get to choose between a casual one-off fishing day, a tournament, or a stab at a full-on career! After choosing one of 15 "virtual" lakes (which are all apparently modelled on the real thing) in locations all around the US of A from which to fish from, you hop into your little watercraft and cruise around till you find a fishing spot with your name on

it. This completely titillating task is aided with the latest in technology, a fish scanner. After finding a suitable spot, the real sport begins.

First bit of advice to master the game is to learn to be patient. Very patient. You could, in theory, go for hours on end without even getting a nibble. But of course, this would be a tragedy in gameplay stakes, so Sierra have opted to give you more options to customise than you could dream of. Not enough aquatic life in the lake? Add some more. The super duck weave fishing line not to your liking? Swap it for another one. That lure not turning you on any more? Change it for one of



Online deathmatch fishing?! Alright! MastahFishFragger: 250, fish: 0

another 199 lures. That beery bloke that's supposed to be you starting to get on your nerves? Go for a sex change. Sick of playing with yourself? Go play online.

Trophy Bass 2 Deluxe is the original game with the Northern Lakes expansion pack built in. It's got plenty of options, supports force feedback and emulates analogue signalling for the cast. Fisherpeople will probably take their hands off their rod long enough to snap this up and love it. The rest of us will continue to ask why.

March Stepnik



**CATEGORY** Sports/Sim

**PLAYERS** 1-TBA

**PUBLISHER** Sierra

**PRICE** \$TBA

**RATING**

**AVAILABLE** Now

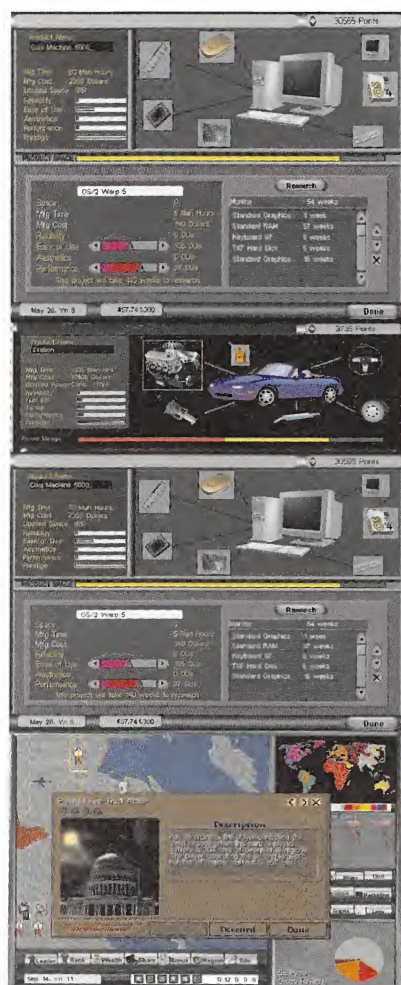
**NEED** 486 DX 66, 16MB RAM

**WANT** Pentium, Win 95

overall

72%

You're really going to have to be an obsessive fisherperson to get the most out of this.



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# Civilisation 2: Multiplayer & Civ2 Classic Collection

**CATEGORY** Strategy

**PLAYERS** 1-8 (TCP/IP, PBEM, Modem, IPX, Hotseat)

**PUBLISHER** Microprose

**PRICE** \$39.95 (Civ2MP)  
\$69.95 (Civ2CC)

**RATING**

**AVAILABLE** Now

**NEED** 486/66, Win 3.x, 2 x CD, 8MB RAM

**WANT** P90, Win 95, 32MB RAM, a forgiving attitude

**overall**

Game: Company:

**90%** **1%**

Two years late, should have been included with the original game, and was withheld for purely mercenary reasons. Still, it's finally here, and it is a great game to multiplay.

**W**hy is it that some game companies think that we won't mind if they add on a feature to a game that should have been there since the start by releasing a pack for half the price of the original? Is it just me, or is this a particularly disgusting mercenary attitude displayed by a large corporation that seems to care more for money than they do for those that support them? Civilisation 2 was released here in May of 1996 - that's over two years ago, and it's taken this long for them to work out how to implement multiplayer functions? I don't think so - especially considering that the core multiplayer code was included with the initial release of the game, just not implemented. Why? Well, in part there was the continuing sales of Civnet, the multiplayer version of Civilisation which would have been affected by Civ2 multiplayer - and we couldn't have that, could we?

Whatever the galling reasons behind this sickening state of affairs, I'm still going to recom-

mend you obtain a copy of this game, for it is after all, Civ2, and it is, finally, multiplayable.

There are actually two products available, 'Civ2 Multiplayer' and the 'Ultimate Civ 2 Classic collection'. The first is just Civ 2 with multiplayer capabilities with an RRP of \$39.95, and the second is largely the same, though it includes the add-on packs, Fantastic Worlds and scenarios (which had previously been sold separately), and will retail for an RRP of \$69.95.

No improvements have been made to the game, bar the multiplayer addition - you still need to have the 'g' key on the number-pad facing north to make any sense of the stupid movement system, for instance. But still, if you enjoy turn-based strategy games this is the king of them all, and finally, you will now be able to pit your skills against real, live opposition. I would encourage any Civ/Civ2 fans to obtain a copy of this, as it is still



**Congratulations to Microprose doing the seemingly impossible: making Gareth REALLY mad**

a great game, but I would also encourage them to register their feelings with Microprose (support@microprose.com) about how they have used and abused those that support them.

Gareth Jones

## Gex 2: Enter The Gecko

**CATEGORY** Platformer

**PLAYERS** 1

**PUBLISHER** Crystal Dynamics

**PRICE** \$TBA

**RATING** TBA

**AVAILABLE** Now

**NEED** P100, 16Mb RAM, 3D card

**WANT** P166, 32Mb RAM, 4-button gamepad

**overall**

**87%**

Perfectly displays why 3D gaming is the future.

**L**iberally taking the piss out of huge portions of the history of Western popular culture is Gex's raison d'être. Whether it's schlock horror films or Bugs Bunny cartoons, James Bond or the Karate Kid, you can be sure Gex will be there with a witty aside and artfully raised eyebrow. That Gex 2 is also a highly accomplished 3D platform game seems almost incidental when confronted by the most charismatic gaming hero in years.

In addition to a voice as camp as a row of tents, Gex sports the singularly lizard-like abilities to flex his tail to wallop enemies, dart his tongue to snatch power-ups and health bonuses, and niftily climb sheer walls and scurry across ceilings. Oh, and he also occasionally likes to dress as Indiana Jones when in the mood for investigating archaeological digs that bear a striking resemblance to Tomb Raider levels.

What I especially like about Gex 2 is its deceptively simple gameplay. You will find yourself breezing through levels at first, reaching the exit(s) all too quickly. But, of course, you won't have



**This enjoyable Playstation platformer... Hey! Where are you going? No, this is really good. No, really! Hey come back!**

completed any of the various objectives - whacking all the purple mushrooms or hitching a ride on the haunted elevator, for instance. More rigorous exploration will reveal all kinds of strange contraptions and devilishly tricky areas. Gex's hidden depths are such that the game borders on Nintendo quality - although a few more subgames are needed for it to scale the heady



heights of Mario and the like.

If you own a 3D card then you will appreciate the visual superiority this has over the Playstation version, but unless you own a decent gamepad the keyboard controls will provide no shortage of maddeningly clumsy moments.

David Wildgoose



# Bass Masters Classic Tournament Edition

**A**fter cutting my teeth on Trophy Bass Deluxe 2, I couldn't see much more that was needed in a fishing sim. Trophy Bass Deluxe 2 is indeed a fine fishing frenzy, with plenty of options, and is done very well. Armed with a horrible winter flu, I sat down to the second offering this month in the fishing genre (pleasantly surprised that there's a large enough market out there to warrant competition), turned up Primus' Sailing the Seas of Cheese CD, and prepared to fish on.

While TBD2 can be called the gentleman's fishing sim, Bass Masters Classic: Tournament Edition will become known as the real fishing sim. The main reason for this is THQ's attention to detail. Rather than a crappy third person view from above the action, BMC brings the action closer to home. While not exactly first person, BMC uses the popular Tomb Raider perspective (please banish all thoughts of any other similarity between the two games - there is

none) which is far more realistic than the overhead view. Secondly, and more importantly, the virtual fishing spot created is really top class. The water surface gently bobs, ducks swim amongst the reeds, ducks fly over head, and the shore looks spectacularly realistic. The water itself (which naturally in a game like this is in abundance) is transparent, and any representation of underwater life can be seen quite clearly from the boat, if the conditions are favourable of course. THQ have nailed the immersion factor with BMC, and while there is always room to improve, BMC is surprisingly complete in this department.

Want to find another fishing spot? Bugger going to the main map and picking all over again! Just ease up the throttle and guide yourself further upstream. In this way, BMC also seems much more continual than other



Well, at least the 3D acceleration is put to good use in the transparent water. Now, where's that rocket launcher...

efforts. The actual process of casting and reeling-in can't be varied all that much, but with the over the shoulder perspective used, and the ability of the fish to drag the lure around the boat a full 360 degrees, the fishing action seems just that little bit more intense.

Bass Masters Classic: Tournament Edition, thanks in part to the magic of 3D acceleration, is a dang good fishing title, and surprisingly, a bit more accessible than most games of its kind.

March Stepnik

**CATEGORY** Sports/Sim

**PLAYERS** 1-8

**PUBLISHER** THQ

**PRICE** \$TBA

**RATING** G

**AVAILABLE** Now

**NEED** P133, 16MB RAM, Direct 3D Compatible video card

**WANT** Nothing special

overall

76%

Three words: can be exciting.

## Ged Computers 400mhz, (450mhz available mid September) Intel Pentium II's

Everyone who's using the ATI all In Wonder Pro Video Cards will be happy with our choice of Sony monitors. Sony's built-in video data/Hard Drive synchronizer allows video streams to be managed professionally. The ATI cards have the Rage Pro x2 Chipset, which are a decent 3d solution in themselves. Ged's built with Righteous 3dfx2's (Scan-line single) are the ultimate for fast twitch Gaming. These puppies, with CPU's capable of running around the 500mhz mark, are just what's ordered to run scan-line at around 100fps+. Sony "rocks" again, by making these high frame rates visible at high resolutions. This is superior to arcade machines, which do not have Sony "Platinum Series" monitors ability to display Hi-res at 100+ fps. So get smart and invest a little more, get a GED. The Tyrannosaurs Rex (Aka; Godzilla) of the '86 age

### GED GAMER PRICING SEPTEMBER 1998

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Intel Pentium II 400mhz "boxed" CPU 100mhz System bus. Dual floating point <b>"SPECIAL"</b>    | \$1290.00 |
| BX chipset Mainboard. Single CPU. Simple switch overclocking. All features. AGPx2              | \$270.00  |
| ATI "All in Wonder Pro" 8mb Pal video card. R.R.P \$945. <b>"SPECIAL GED PRICE"</b>            | \$760.00  |
| ATX Midi Deluxe Case with Secondary Fan. Case \$155.00, Fan \$18.00                            | \$173.00  |
| Surge Suppressor (Essential) Keyboard and Mouse.   | \$190.00  |
| Righteous 3dfx2's 12mb. Each \$540.00 Scan-line  | \$1080.00 |
| 128mb 100ns Fast SDRAM.  | \$390.00  |
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| Banksia Wave SP Modem '56  | \$269.00  |
| Cambridge Soundworks Speakers "The best sound under \$800.00"                                  | \$399.00  |
| Maxtor 3440 Series Hard Drive 13.6 gb 9.0ms seek. ATA-4 / Enhanced IDE Compatible.             | \$980.00  |
| Video cabling and extensions, to hook up TV, VCR and camcorders. "At cost."                    | \$70.00   |
| Sony Monitors discounts vary from \$20.00 off the R.R.P of the 15" CPD-200ES which equals      | \$635.00  |
| GED price \$40.00 off the 17" CPD-200ES = \$1,155.00 GED price. \$60.00 off the 17" GDM200SP = | \$1935.00 |
| GED price \$80.00 off the 19" GDM-400PS = \$2570.00 GED price \$120.00 off the 21" GDM-500PS = | \$4180.00 |

Windows 98 will be done at cost which is \$255.00. This is the full version. Plus good old Sony may throw in some sweeteners, like free floppy drives. The new "NUSOUND" soundcards really appeal to us as they fit in with our philosophy of Performance, Value and Price. Great cards. When matched with Soundworks speakers you have "Amazing sound!" Another GED hardware match made in heaven. The Maxtor 3440 Series Hard Drives are available from 3.4gb to 13.6gb. Platter size is 3.4gb at ATA-4 "Hot". We file all hardware warranty material for our customers, as the units go out the door. We will be supporting our models from our Web site, and a Bi-monthly customer support issue, on CD-ROM. E-mail us on GED@IDEAL.NET.AU. Phone GED for orders, Pricing and hardware variations (GED can configure to suit any hardware variations). Delivery Australia wide, freight charges applicable as per location. So contact GED now and make a value purchase. GED Computers are built by enthusiasts for enthusiasts, so we build with plenty of T.L.C. Customer support and performance enhancement is what GED is about.

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# EDDIE KANTAR'S BRIDGE COMPANION

Roadshow (02) 9552 8700 • Price: \$19.95

**Now these are games!**

**E**ddie Kantar Jr. is a name that should be well known to bridge aficionados (but nobody else). Apparently he's a world renowned bridge expert, author and syndicated columnist, known everywhere for his bridge prowess.

If you were thinking of purchasing this game, then it's probably only good idea if you are familiar with big Ed - i.e if you know how to play the game and understand the intricacies of it. The reason being that though there are help files included as part of the package they aren't really of a standard that will teach you to be competent and fully conversant with the rules and intricacies. And it is a com-

plex game, too. I've never played before, and though the basic concept was familiar to me (4 players get 13 cards each, and you try to win 'tricks'), understanding how to actually play was largely a mystery, even after the help and tutorials.

This wasn't helped by the somewhat confusing interface. Taking for granted that usually only one player will play at the one time, it seems incongru-

ous that both you and your "partner's" cards will be displayed on screen. And add to this the fact that you actually play both hands during the game, and it all adds up to a mystifying experience. I'm no bridge expert, (far

from it) but it seems very strange that you would be able to see your partners hand of cards - sort of an unfair advantage.

If you can get past this though, and you are fairly aware of the rules of bridge then at \$20 it would seem to be a good deal. You can play with a friend (hotseat), and there are interactive tutorials (presumably with Eddie himself at

**The computerised version is made a tad easier by allowing you to see (and play) your "partner's" cards**

the helm) to guide you through some of the trickier moments, as well as a range of difficulty levels, so there does seem to be enough variety in the gameplay to keep you occupied for a while.

Gareth Jones



# GRANDMASTER CHESS

Roadshow (02) 9552 8700 • Price: \$19.95

**A**h Chess. One of the most enduring games of all time, one that nobody will ever master, save for perhaps a huge MOFO computer in the future, depending upon your philosophical viewpoint. No flashy 3D graphics card required, no gratuitous body parts flying around, no complex keyboard commands to remember, just the age old battle-

field of the intellects, whether they be artificial or real.

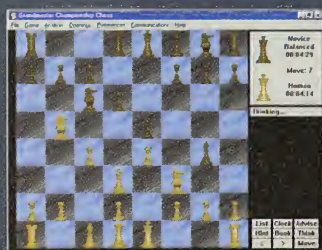
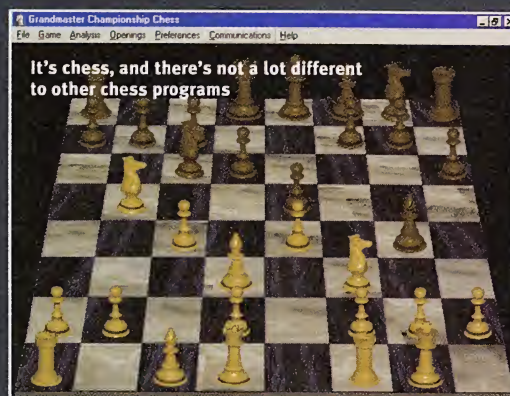
Grandmaster Chess is but one of the many chess packages out there, and while it does little to distinguish itself from the pack, neither is it left behind. Along with the range of chess board 'styles' available, and the option of playing on a 2D or 3D board, there is also a compendium of thousands of famous games from the Grandmasters of Chess, as well as multiple skill levels so that you can match your computer adversary for an even challenge.

And it's multiplayable too, with options for both network and modem play, which is always a nice touch. There is also

a fully featured set of options for hints, explanations of your position and what's happening, ratings (US based, but still vaguely useful), and options to take back moves and remove pieces. Even if you've never played the game before there is a complete novice skill level and a mostly helpful help file to explain the pieces and the moves possible, so you should be able to get into the game without too many difficulties along the way.

The downside is that even though the package is only \$20,

if you're on the web there are plenty of other chess applications available free for download with almost as many features, and some of them even offer a free game matching and playing server complete with rankings and chat boxes for internet play. Still, the systems requirements for this are low (a 486SX/33 is all you will need) and it is relatively cheap, so you could do a lot worse for the money.





# VIRTUAL CASINO

**Poker & Roulette • Video Poker & Slots • Blackjack & Craps**

Roadshow (02) 9552 8700 • Price: \$29.95 EACH

What's even more American than apple pie, rabid xenophobia, a passion for self interest second to none, and doing things bigger, bigger, bigger? The only thing that comes close is actually a part of America itself - Las Vegas of course. Drive through weddings, the never ending promise of something for nothing, mile after mile of incredibly monstrous casinos dressed up with oh so pretty lights that shine 24/7 in an effort to mask the sleazy, desperate and filthy underbelly that lies beneath and, of course, gambling. Or, as those in the industry like to call it, gaming - as if pitting your hard earned money against stacked house odds was all part of a fun and entertaining 'game'.

Anyway, if gambling is your thing, then you might be foolhardy enough to part with some more of your money for this decidedly mediocre effort from a division of The Learning Company. Each CD has two different forms of gambling on them, and each costs \$30 bucks -

and though that might sound cheap, for all three that's \$60 - and there is much better out there for a similar price.

The video and text offered to explain how to play the 'games' is enough if you just need a refresher course on the rules, but if you've never played before then it's still going to be a mystery to you, which is unfortunate. Other than that, it's really just a gambling sim, and there's not a lot else to say about it.

You can play slot machines, which consists of pressing your mouse button to pull the lever, or blackjack which is much the same thing albeit with a few more mouse clicks, or perhaps roulette which consists of popping a few chips down on a number and then waiting to see what number comes up. A fantastic experience, as I'm sure you can imagine.

The games of poker (both video poker for 'credits' and player versus player/poker are offered, though in separate packs) are marginally more satisfying, offer a higher degree of interaction, and require at least some thought. I'm prepared to accept the interest in gambling of this nature in a casino, whether that be using craps, blackjack, roulette, poker, or whatever. At least that way you have the opportunity to possibly win some money or at least



Oooh! How exciting! Insert money. Press button. Insert money. Press button. Insert money...

coins when I 'cashed out'. All up, I was left feeling empty both during and afterwards. What's the point of playing for pretend money, when the 'thrill' of losing or winning real money is such a large part of the gambling experience? Even so, if you do enjoy this kind of thing, there are far better packages available.



break even and have an enjoyable night. With gambling simulations I just can't get past the 'what's the point?' question. During playtesting of the different games, on occasion I won what would be significant amounts of money in the real world which provided a fleeting experience of happiness, until I realised that the floppy drive wouldn't be spewing out thousands of





# UNREAL

## PLAYGUIDE PART 1: GETTING STARTED

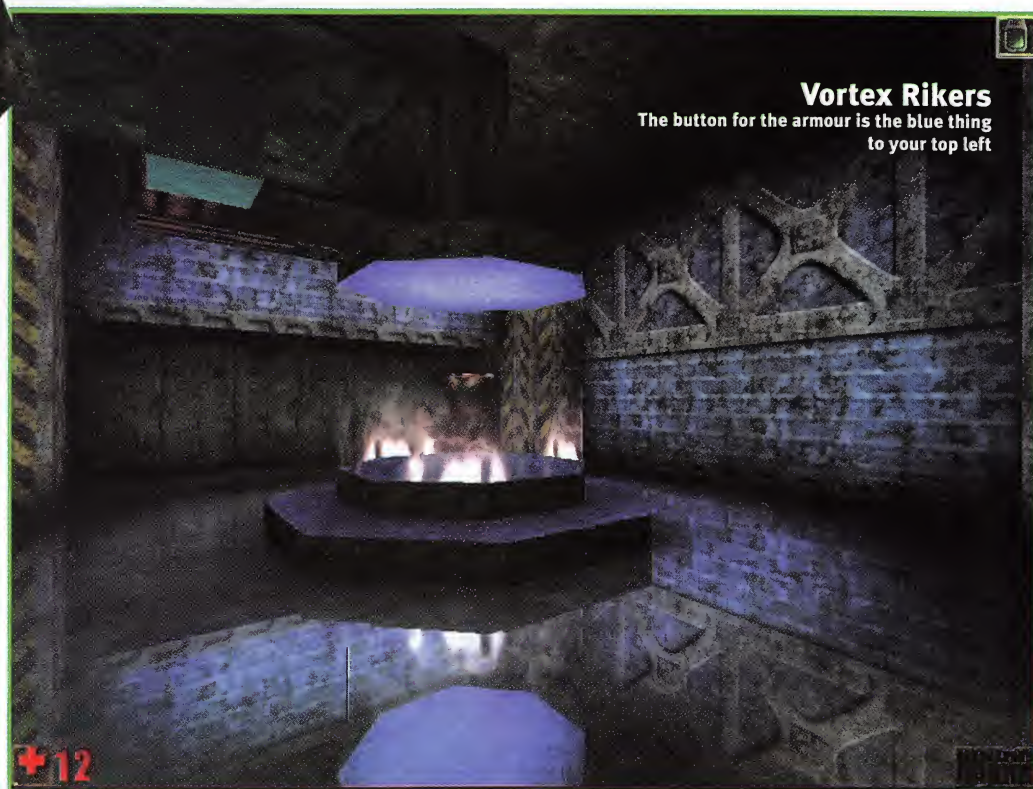
Live a little longer in the Greatest Game Ever.



### Vortex Rikers

You start this level with no weapons and very little health. Thankfully, there are no enemies on the Vortex Rikers, and all you have to do is find your way out.

Get out of your cell, take the elevator up and watch out for the falling floor. Make sure you grab the Universal Translator and anything else you can find lying around. Follow the airshaft around until you get to the Armoury door. Here you can get an assault vest if you jump up and activate the blue switch on the ceiling near the vest. Follow the corridor out of the Armoury through the Med Lab, until you come to a semi-open door. You'll hear a skirmish on the other side and when the door opens you'll see a Skaarj soldier running away from the carnage. Grab the



### Vortex Rikers

The button for the armour is the blue thing to your top left

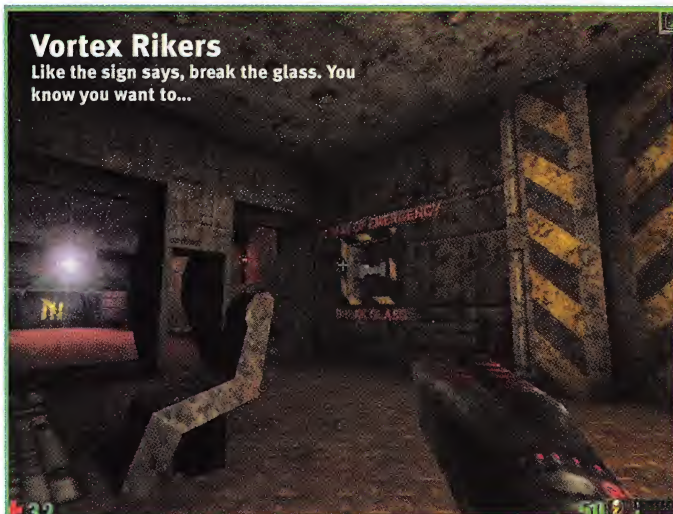
Dispersion Pistol and keep moving. Keep going until you reach the emergency exit. Shoot the

glass that protects the switch, and the floor hatch will open. Jump down.

game speed to 200% as it's a long swim. Get out, take the lift up and explore the cave. Follow the cave around and you'll exit on the river bank. Past the Nali house you'll encounter your first Brute - use the Auto-Mag in alt-fire mode from a distance and avoid his rockets. Enter the complex, take the lift up, kill two more Brutes and you'll be outside again. A Manta will come flying at you - kill it by running backwards while shooting at it with your Auto-Mag. Take a left outside and enter a warehouse. Kill the Brute that's patrolling and pick up the stuff you find lying around. Exit the warehouse and enter the underground area through the double sliding door.

### Vortex Rikers

Like the sign says, break the glass. You know you want to...



### Nyleve's Falls

This is a beautiful level and the first one to truly show off the power of Unreal's 3D engine.

You start inside the Vortex Rikers but then exit into a massive canyon where your prison ship crashed. Stay a while and admire the view. Then head out towards the Nali house. Pick up the Auto-Mag outside the house. Head towards the cliff and take a running jump on the leftmost side of the cliff. You should hopefully land in the river. Swim towards your right - you may want to increase the



## UNREAL

**Rrajigar Mine**

You'll encounter heaps of enemies in this level and most of it is close-quarters corridor fighting, so be prepared.

As you enter the mine, head to the platform to your right and light the way at the end with a flare. In here is a secret room with an Assault Vest. Head back and then take the first door on your left and kill the Brute who greets you with some rockets.

Follow the corridor around and avoid the lava like the plague. At the end of it will be two columns of electricity and two switches. Turn both switches off and head back. You'll encounter your first Skaarj in a scene that requires the brownest of underwear. The best way to take him

**Nyleve's Falls**

There's a Super Health Pack over there if you get past this guy

**Nyleve's Falls**

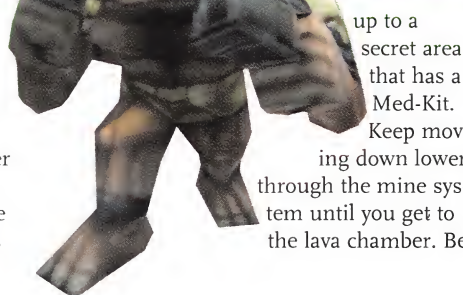
This Nyleve guy must have been an Olympic diver



out is drop heaps of flares around you when all the lights go out. Then use your Auto-Mag and alt-fire while running backwards - when you reach the end of the corridor, turn around and do it again the other way while avoiding his blasts.

Head back the way you came,

taking out Brutes and Tentacles as you go. When you get back to the start, take the other doorway. Shoot the fuel canister you see on the ledge and it will blow a hole in the wall that opens



very careful as the floor falls away in some areas - if the ground starts shaking, jump backwards. Around to your right you'll find a Nali dude that will lead you to a secret room with a Stinger. To get this, though, you'll have to protect him from the Skaarj around the corner who wants Nali steaks tonight. To the left of this room you'll find a bridge lowered over the lava. Shoot the red button on the other side of the pit and the bridge will raise. Follow it across, through the cavern, until you get to the control room. Flick the switch and the panels on the central column will lower to reveal four switches. Flick them and two doors will open and a Skaarj will jump out of one of them. Kill him and take a door - they both lead to the same lift.

Take it up, head around the corridor to your left, then right. When you reach the red wheel, activate it and a platform will lower itself - shoot the crate on the platform and jump on. It will take you up to the mezzanine level. Head to your left killing Brutes and Tentacles. You'll encounter another Nali who will open a door to an Assault Vest if you protect him from the Skaarj. Keep following the corridors until you get to another lava pit.



## UNREAL

### Rrajigar Mine

The secret area is that dark patch to your right...



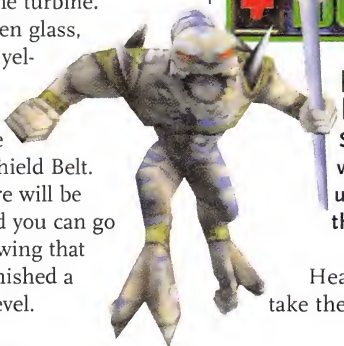
Nali. Around to your right there is another ore cart - flick the red switch, ride it up and make sure the Brute at the top doesn't shoot you off.

Follow the corridor to your left and kill the Skaarj at the console. Head over the bridge until you get to the room with the Lesser Brute. Wait until he's close to the fuel canisters then shoot at them to give him some hurt. Keep heading through the corridors until you get to a room with some large, glowing green barrels in it. Flick both switches and keep

Watch out for the bridges as they tend to collapse. Head to the right where you'll find another Nali. Protect him from the Brute and he'll open a door to your first Dispersion Pistol Powerup.

Head over the bridge into the blast furnace area. Keep heading down until you get to a room where a Skaarj will run at you after he steps off a small lift. Kill him, take the lift up, kill the Skaarj who is sharpening his blades and step carefully along the girder. To your right there is a Shield Belt on top of some crates. Grab it and head towards the lift. After you flick the switch, a Brute will come down on the lift. Kill him and ride the lift up. You'll be on a platform with four turbines on either side. Head along the platform and when you get to the broken railing on your right, strafe left as hard as you can to avoid being sucked into the turbine. Shoot the green glass, flick all three yellow buttons and head

back to where you got the Shield Belt. The door there will be open now and you can go through, knowing that you've just finished a damn huge level.



### Depths of Rrajigar

Short and sweet with some mighty useful powerups for the taking.

Head to your right and take the lift up to the next

level. If you jump off before the lift reaches the top and go under the lift platform, you'll find a secret room with the ASMD in it. Head back up and flick the switch next to the ore cart. Jump on the cart and take out the Brute and Skaarj before they get a chance to kill the

heading the way you were going. Kill the Skaarj at the console at the end of the corridor, flick the switch next to him and the door to the right and below you will open. Jump onto the crates to get the Shield Belt then head through the door.



### Rrajigar Mine

... and another one over there by the barrel o' fun



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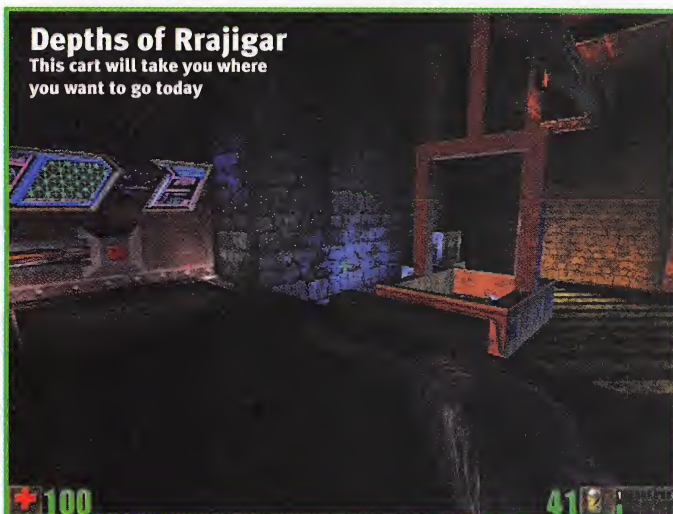
## UNREAL

**Depths of Rrajigar**

Push those red things under those barrel things.  
This is as technical as it gets.

**Depths of Rrajigar**

This cart will take you where  
you want to go today

**Sacred Passage**

This level introduces you to some Nali architecture and gives you another chance to stare at that beautiful Unreal sky.

Keep heading out until you get to the clearing with the Nali ruins in the centre. Head around

to the back of the building until you find a pond. Jump in the water and follow the underwater passage, killing any fish that hassle you. Swim really fast and you'll exit just to the rear of the ruins. Enter the doorway that leads into the cavern. The second pillar with the face on it is a

switch - jump up and flick it to gain access to the pool beyond which will give you a Super Health Pack.

Head back out and approach the small door opposite the cavern. There's a footplate just outside the door - step on it and the door will open to let you into the ruins. Kill the Brute to your left, then head to your right. Flick the lever behind the fountain to release the water into the pool. It opens the door. Head through the doorway to your right.

**Chizra-Nali Water God Temple**

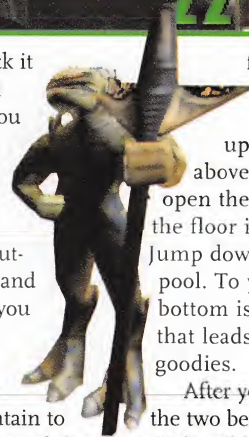
This level is the quest for the Eightball Gun, and you'll encounter a tough new adversary, the amphibious Slith.

Head around to your left as soon as you enter. When you get to the pool, stand on the wooden platform and shoot the

four chains holding it down.

As it rises, jump up to hit the switch above you. This will open the wooden bars on the floor in front of you. Jump down and into the pool. To your left at the bottom is a secret passage that leads to a room full of goodies.

After you come out, climb the two beams and at the top a Nali will lead you to another room of goodies. To the right of this there is a wooden pole with a platform on top - there is a hidden switch in the doorway to your left that you must push to lower the platform. Go up and grab the ASMD in the middle of the pool. The first alcove to your left has a switch that will drop you into a room with more switches. The switch for the door in front of you is the middle of the three to your right. Push it and exit the room.





## UNREAL

Ahead of you will be some stairs, but head to the corridor on your right. Here you'll encounter your first Slith on the wooden bridge - try and kill him before he jumps off into the water below, as the Slith are more agile in water. Jump down and finish off the other Slith - they're easier to kill with automatic weapons.

After you kill them, walk along the narrow walkway and touch the stone face. This will open the door ahead of you - do not walk

through the middle as you will be hit by a poison dart trap. Ride the platform up and jump across when you get to the top. Here, another Nali will lead you into a room full of Flies. Kill them all and he will show you a switch to your left. Punch it to lower a blue stone column to your right. Get on top of it and ride it up. It will take you back to the pool where you got the ASMD.

Go back down again and this time take the stairs down, killing the Skaarj that is there now.

Drop down into the pit and swim around the underwater passages as there are rooms down here containing Tarydium shards and an Assault Vest. Head back to the spot where you dropped in and there will be a passage behind you. Jump up to it, follow it around and flick the switch to lower the lift that will take you back up to the stairs.

Follow them down again but this time jump over the pit. Head to your right and avoid any poles sticking out of walls as they will smack you and cause you some hurt. To the right you'll find a large door - the switch for it is a square brick directly behind you. Smack it and enter the doorway. Jump across the pool in front of you and grab the Super

### Sacred Passage

The secret panel is one of the face bricks ahead



Health Pack. Jump back and take the hall on your left. Follow the wooden platform all the way around and down into a basement with a lever in it. Push the lever and head back up where a moving platform will be waiting. Take it down and enter the large room

through the large golden door. This is the room of the Eightball Gun, but you can't reach it yet.

Finish off the Slith and take the golden door to your left. There will be a small Aztec-like pyramid in the water - jump on to it and jump off straight away. This will bring on some lightning that punches a hole in the wall on top of the sloped beam. This leads you into a room with a Skaarj, some crucified Nali and heaps of Eightballs. Go back down and dive into the water. Head to your left and you'll find some underwater passages. Follow them around and they will lead you into a room with an assault vest.

Head back out and up the wooden ramp out of the water and through the golden door again. Head to the other side of the large chamber and out through the golden door on the other side. There is a pool with an obelisk in the middle and some Nali being hassled by Slith. Kill the Slith and take the passage to your right. The first wall torch you find has a secret passage under it that leads to some goodies including a Kevlar Suit. Keep heading around until you come to some loose stones. Jump up until you get to the top, then go into the Pool of Thunder. The waterfall here contains a Super Health Pack behind it, and the pool contains Scuba Gear. Kill the Skaarj that appears and return to the chamber that has the Eightball Gun. A room with a lever in it has opened now, and flicking that



### Chizra - Nali Water God temple

Wood must break free - shoot the chains that hold the platform down.



### Sacred Passage

Let's go for a swim, shall we



## UNREAL

**Chizra - Nali Water God temple**

Excuse me sir, could you tell me the way to the Eightball Gun?



lever will raise a walkway that leads to the sweet weapon of destruction. Grab it and the gold door in front of you will open. Head around the wooden platforms to the blue teleporter. Enter it and it will take you to the stone seal that is now open. Kill the Skaarj guarding it and enter the Ceremonial Chambers.

**Ceremonial Chambers**

A great deal of this level is played out underwater, so keep an eye on your Scuba Gear's air supply at all times.

Take the path to your left and left again through the first door. Go through the golden door and carefully traverse the narrow walkway. Jump across and grab the Eightball Gun and ammo. A Skaarj will come through the door dead ahead of you and you will need to take him out as quickly as possible so he doesn't knock you off the platform - use a tight cluster of 3-4 eightballs aimed at his feet.

Head back out through the golden door and down the ramps. Between the two ramps on the far wall is a secret room just under the water line that contains Scuba Gear and an Auto-Mag. Jump out and swim straight down - you'll see a lever but before you push it,

take out the Slith swimming towards you. Slith are very fast and agile in the water so forget about your Eightball Gun. Use the Stinger or the Auto-Mag in alt-fire mode. After you kill them, push the lever and start swimming down the watery passage. At the end there is another lever; push it and swim all the way back and emerge from the water.

Now head back up the twin wooden ramps, take a right until you're in the area you started in, then go through the other door, then right until you are on the wooden platforms suspended above the water in a jungle-type area. Take a right and head all the way to the golden door, taking out the Slith and Skaarj that obstruct you. Through the golden door is a bottomless pit room with a walkway to a Super Health Pack on the other side. There is a Nali levitating over it, and the only way to get it is to kill him - consider him a casualty of war.

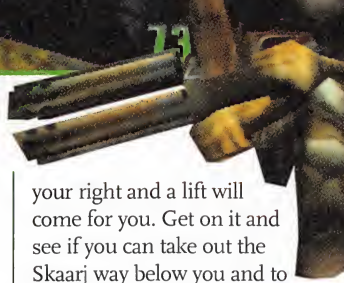
Head all the way back along the wooden platform until you get to the Assault Vest - grab it and jump off. Head through the golden door and up the platform to your right. The way is barred and only opens when you kill all the Skaarj that will come for you up the platform. Kill them and proceed until you get to a room with a door looking out into a ravine. Hit the lever to

Once you are on the platform, push the lever that will activate a harpoon gun that fires into the wall of the ravine opposite. Jump on the wire and walk along it to the end where you can jump off onto the beams. These will take you into a hallway cut into the ravine walls above. Head in and try and take out the Skaarj before he decapitates the Nali. Grab the goodies on the wooden platform and jump off onto the wooden raft that will float down the river. Push the face carving when you get to the end to open the doorway that will give you access to a hole in the floor. Jump down and prepare to enter the Dark Arena.

**Next Month:**

The rest! Stay tuned for Part 2 and you'll have all you need (except skill, although we're sure you're nothing less than awesome, of course) to finish this truly mighty game.

- Deathmatch Tactics
- Special Weapon Tricks
- Beastiary



your right and a lift will come for you. Get on it and see if you can take out the Skaarj way below you and to your right, otherwise you will have to face him on the ground.

Follow the platform above the water around until it ends, then swim to the next one on your right. Again, try and take the Slith out from a distance, otherwise you will have to face them in the water.

**Ceremonial Chambers**

Watch your step now, that lava ain't too forgiving.







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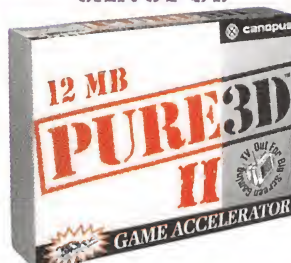
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# TIPS & TACTICS

Eliminate the learning curve.

## DARK EARTH

★ Bogdaran can be a tough nut to crack at first. Rough him up a little, and he'll talk.

★ When in doubt, try your dark mood. Some objects can't be found, moved, or affected unless you're cranky.

★ Shankcreatures can't be hurt by ordinary hand-to-hand weapons. This is why you should save your thunderbolts (the thunderbolt from before, and Zed's thunderbolt) and your flamethrower for the end of the game. Don't waste them on human opponents! If you do, you'll be sorry.

## DESCENT FREESPACE—THE GREAT WAR

★ The Match Speed feature is a god-send. Use it to get on your opponents' tails, but make sure you stay there. It doesn't help much if they're coming toward you.

★ For maximum effect, take out a ship's shields before firing hull-damaging missiles. This is a simple strategy, but it's highly effective.

★ Proper shield management is your best chance for survival. Increasing your shield recharge rate is generally a good idea. Keep your enemies directly behind or in front of you (the latter is much better), and use the up and down cursor keys to keep those shields strong.

★ Aside from your firing and targeting keys, map the following keys to the joystick for convenience at any given second: match speed, accelerate, afterburner, launch countermeasures, augment forward shield, augment rear shield. Also, if your joystick supports a throttle, you'll need to map it in the "ship" section of the configuration screen to get it to work.



## DOMINION: GIFT OVER STORM

★ Be aware of your unit effectiveness against various targets. There is nothing worse than charging into the enemy only to realize his unit is invulnerable to small-arms fire.

★ Watch for engineers sneaking about. In general, your base should be ringed by cheap infantry on all sides—not just the side facing the enemy.

★ The AI is fuzzy about sending units to help out even when its buddies are being slain nearby. Whenever you hear combat, make sure your allies are actually helping out.

## FORSAKEN

★ Keep an eye on the number of enemies killed when you save a game; as you get near the end of the level, don't be afraid to use your better weapons, because they won't carry over into the next level.

★ The mouse is probably the best way to fly and aim; if you want to use a joystick, be sure to experiment with sensitivity settings for precise aiming.

★ Even if you're not going to use them, select Solaris or Scatter missiles; the targeting brackets are a great way to keep track of enemies in dark areas.



## INDEPENDENCE DAY

★ When your health is low, find an invincibility pick-up. It will render your plane invincible for 20 seconds and restore you to full health.

★ Don't waste too much time chasing small alien fighters. Go straight for the primary targets instead.

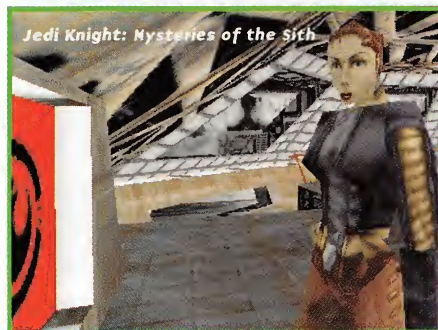
★ Of all possible flying views, the outside rear view will give you the best targeting scope.





## JEDI KNIGHT: MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

- ★ Keep an eye on the 2D map to find secret areas and hidden passages.
- ★ Many levels require passage through easy-to-miss grates that must be cut open with the lightsaber.
- ★ Save your Force stars for the later levels when you'll really need them; max out your advanced offensive Force powers like Lightsaber Throw and Destruction.



## PANZER COMMANDER

- ★ Never run your tanks in column formation if you are going to give them the fire-at-will command; they will kill each other by accident. The inverted wedge formation is usually the safest.
- ★ Don't disregard bunkers until you identify which weapons they have. Machine guns are usually irrelevant, but an antitank gun behind some sandbags can ruin your whole day.
- ★ Following your waypoints usually results in an early death. Assume that ambushes abound along your route, and use them as a loose guideline while taking a route with better cover.

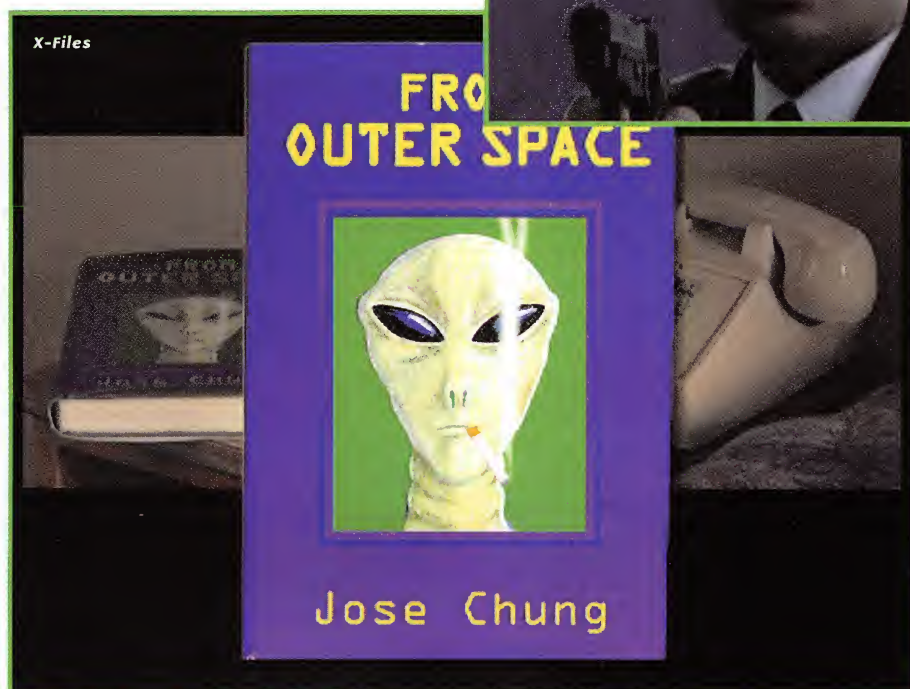


## TOTAL ANNIHILATION: THE CORE CONTINGENCY

- ★ Almost every scenario requires you to build up heavy air defenses immediately and then prepare to repel a heavy enemy thrust as soon as your radar towers go up. Build up long-range siege guns and nuke and pound the computer player.
- ★ Beware the Krogoth! Unless your defenses are very deep, you will be forced to use your Commander's Disintegrator and the resulting explosion will leave your Commander teetering on the brink.
- ★ On maps with rivers, ditch some metal makers underwater where they will remain pretty much safe against the myopic computer player.

## X-FILES GAME

- ★ Don't leave the office without all the goodies in your desk drawer.
- ★ Wilmore's password, in case you haven't figured it out, is the name of a famous battle during the Civil War.
- ★ Turn off the agent intuition unless you're absolutely tearing your hair out over a missing piece of the puzzle—otherwise this game will be no fun at all.





# ORACLE

He just knows...

You haven't turned up for work in days. Your friends come around, but you don't answer the door. The only sign of life is the radiant glow of the PC screen behind the curtains. You're stuck and it hurts. What do you do? Easy... ask the Oracle, he knows all.

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## BLACK DAHLIA

**?** I'm having problems trying to open the safe. I know the code, so that's not the problem. But, I can't seem to apply it properly. For example, I'm using 10, 50, 20 as the combo? Am I missing a step or two? Can you walk me through this?

**Louie Kokoris**  
Internet

**\*** Yup.... Here's the key. 15 left, 37 right, 16 left. Easy...oops....that was the combination for the Sefton RSL club safe..... Here's how it's really done. Turn it clockwise a couple of times. Keep going clockwise to the first number. Turn counter-clockwise PAST the first number and to the 2nd number. Turn clockwise to the 3rd number. Voila. Be sure to click and hold the safe handle.

## CARMAGEDDON

**?** I know this is an odd question to ask, but is there any way to completely remove the pedestrians from a game? I enjoy the game as is, especially splatting them across my windscreen, but my girlfriend finds it offensive. Is there a way to remove all pedestrians from a level so I can play multiplayer?

**Bill P.**  
Beaconsfield, NSW

**\*** Without the, erm, moving targets, the game is going to be very difficult to complete. If you can't mow down people you will find yourself quickly running out of time. On anything other than easiest difficulty (and possibly even then, on the later levels) time is so tight that you need to get the time bonuses from hitting the moving targets. But if you really insist on not running your pedestrians off the road, try starting the game using the command line "carma -german".

## DARK EARTH

**?** Duuhhh...I'm having deep trouble in the final moments of Dark Earth. How do you throw the Unknown object to the well without getting killed to enter the Crypt? I got blasted a million times! Please show me the keyboard command for throwing the Unknown object from before.

**Adam Tym**  
Orange, NSW

**\*** Throw the object from before into the well, turn around, and RUN LIKE HELL. If that's too difficult, throw your keyboard into the well, and learn to play darts. I believe that you have to be facing away from the well to survive.

## DARK EARTH

**?** I have reached the point where you can play that board game - I can't remember the name of it - where you place pieces on the board and capture the dark pieces of your opponent. If you win, you get information, but I can't seem to win! Every time you play, you must surrender a weapon. I was wondering: Is it just IMPOSSIBLE to win the first time? Is the information essential to finish the game?

**Nigel Fong**  
Gold Coast, QLD

**\*** Jong, or as it is more commonly known, Othello, is not impossible to win; it just takes common sense. If you really insist on going on the information you gain, it doesn't help you finish the game, but serves as a means to fill in parts of the storyline that you might

otherwise never learn. Also, if you keep playing him, he gives you ammo for thunderbolts that will come in handy later on in the game. Avoid making moves that will give away either corner or border squares. If all else fails, there is a save-game spot about three or four screens away.

## DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

**?** Okay, I'm stuck and I need help. On the Labyrinth level on the ledge with the Blunderbuss, just how do you get there? I have tried to jump down to it from above (from the sliding platforms above). I have tried to jump across from each side but just keep falling to my death. Can someone help me please!

**Steve, Alex and Pat**  
Internet

**\*** As usual it's a sequence of switches, starting with the hidden one across from where you first saw the blunderbuss. Go in the alcove, then the left hallway just inside the alcove. Go immediately right, then face the wall and hit 'space' bar to open panel.







## DIE BY THE SWORD

**?** I am stuck on the mining level of Die by the Sword. It is the level just after you have to jump over all the cogs. I've killed everyone that is around, blown up the mining machine but I can't figure out what to do next.

**Ahmed Toofik**  
Maroubra, NSW

**\*** Sounds to me like you've been working a little too hard at the post office - take a holiday or something before you crack. OK, here's what you really need to be doing. Once you trash the machine, climb up and go through the tunnel that the machine was making. Be careful though - if you used one of the cheats to get this far, the game doesn't always notice that you finished the level properly.

## INTERSTATE 76

**?** Just got I76, and am up to scene 11, where I have to get across Pecos. There are two bridges over the canyon connected by a small island. As soon as I get across the first bridge, they both blow up and I am stranded on the island in the middle of the canyon. What the hell do I do!? I tried going along the small roads, but never got anywhere. Planes, choppers and stand alone guns eventually get me. I tried jumping over the second part of the canyon, but even with the car stripped of all the weapons, armour, and anything else that wasn't needed to run it as fast as possible, even with the chassis taken down to the bare minimum, I never even got close to making the jump... I even tried with the Nitro boosters, but that only made me hit the wall below where I should land, much faster. How about a hint or two...

**Peter Chris**  
Petersham, NSW

**\*** There's a dirt road to the right as you cross the first bridge. Follow that and eventually you will find a way to cross. At the other side you will find two babes waiting to cater for your every desire, Cindi and Barbi. Say hi to 'em - and tell em the Oracle sent you...

## MYSTERIES OF THE SITH

**?** OK, maybe everyone has played through MOTS already and maybe I've been staring at the screen too long, but can you tell me how to get out of the cell at the beginning of level 8. Nothing I try seems to help. I would sure appreciate any assistance.

**Con "Deviate" Panos**  
Canterbury, NSW

**\*** Use force pull on the guard's key. And make sure that's the ONLY tool you pull on.

## OUTLAWS

**?** I'm in the level with the wind tunnel that keeps you from falling in the gorge. How do I get to the upper level? I've already gone through deadman's leap and all the water caves.

**Craig Law**  
Internet

**\*** Jump off dead man's leap then swim and walk through the tunnels until you come to the bottomless wind pit. You want to end up on the ledge directly across from you and not the one above that. Step up to the ledge and SAVE YOUR GAME! Strafe over to the right a little and aim for the far left of the opposing ledge then run across and then crouch just as you get to the other side. It's highly unlikely you will get it right the first time so make sure you save the game to avoid unnecessary cursing.



## UNREAL

**?** Okay, after 2 days of playing this ultra cool game I am stuck. I'm around the 5th or 6th map. I flushed the water into the pool and the door to the temple of water god Chizra opened. In there, I see the indoor pool, and inside the pool there is a table chained to four corners. Where do I go from here? I can't see where to go or what to do. If you could help me I would be very grateful, maybe send you a case of beer or two.

**John and Angela**  
Internet

**\*** You probably didn't read the message earlier that said "wood must rise". See the switch above the platform that's chained down. What you need to do is shoot the chains to let the wood float high enough to reach the switch. OK, don't forget to forward those cases of beer...

## ZORK: GRAND INQUISITOR

**?** I just blew open the lockers in G.U.E. and got into the Dungeon Masters own locker. I know I'm supposed to get into Mir's old locker too, to get the Pro-Zork pill. But for some reason, I can't open the damn thing! I can't even get the cursor to change into an action cursor over the locker. Do I have a defective copy of this game? Am I missing a step?

**Paul McDougall**  
Internet

**\*** You're missing a step. Look on the floor. Leaning against the locker is a candy wrapper. Write down what its name is, then go and try to buy that from the vending machine and someone's locker will be open. Just don't try to buy your candy from the guy in the overcoat - he has a lolly you just DON'T wanna eat.





# CODE

Be stuck no more

## BATTLEZONE

### Cheat codes

Hold SHIFT and CONTROL and enter the following codes:

**unlimited ammo:** BZTNT

**unlimited health:** BZBODY

**Unlimited Pilots:** BZFREE

**Full Map:** BZRADAR

**IAMADIRTYCHEATER:** type at mission briefing screen and it enables all the missions.

## COMANCHE 3.0

### Cheat codes

While in the game, type 'r' to activate the radio. Type in these words and press enter:

**ratz** - Invisibility (lasts for 30 seconds)

**cowz** - Freeze enemies (lasts for 30 seconds)

**ipig** - Overload weapons

**cat9** - Fix damage

**dog9** - Recharge weapon

**bat9** - GPS Hellfires

## CROC: LEGEND OF THE GOBBES

### Cheat codes

Type in these codes during gameplay or on the island select screen:

**LLLLRRLLDRDLUR** - All secrets, warp to last level

**ARGOLIFE** - Unlimited lives

**ARGOSKIP** - Level select

## DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

### Cheat codes

During gameplay enter:

**elvis** = Unlimited Health

**help** = Pauses the game

In addition you can edit the config.dat file in the Deathtrap Dungeon\Asylum directory to access all the levels. To do this open the file and change the PROGRESS line to **PROGRESS 1023**

## DOMINION

### Cheat codes

Hit **ENTER** and type in the following codes and then hit **ENTER** again:

**combustion** = kills enemy units

**zipper** = speed build

**lushee** = increases resources

**infrared** = reveals map

## DUKE NUKEM 3D: PLUTONIUM

### Cheat mode

**DN Cornholio** - Turns God mode on or off and gives you unlimited jetpack fuel

**DN Kroz** - Turns God mode on or off and gives you unlimited jetpack fuel

**DN Cosmo** - Gives you unlimited jetpack fuel  
**DN Stuff** - Gives you all the weapons, keys and full ammo

**DN Items** - Gives you all of the items and keycards

**DN Scotty # (episode) # (level)** - Warp to a level

**DN Cashman** - Makes you spew money

**DN View** - Gives you a third-person view of Duke

**DN Rate** - Displays current frame rate

**DN Skill#** - Changes the skill level

**DN Hyper** - Get high on steroids

**DN Weapons** - This is similar to STUFF, but without the items (Jetpack, Medkit, Steroids, etc.,)

## ENTREPRENEUR

### Cheat codes

Single-player only

Press **TAB**, type in code, press

**ENTER**

**zeropercentinterest** - gives \$10,000,000

**canyouspareadime** - gives \$100,000,000

**nomoneydown** - gives \$100,000,000

**iseelondoniseefrance** - researches all regions

**feelthatmojorising** - gives 10 of each resource

**idkfa** - gives 99 of each resource

**hitmeagain** - gives one action card

**upmysleeve** - gives full hand of cards

**impressme** - current research project completed

## MYTH: THE FALLEN LORDS

### Level select

To select any level hold the spacebar down while selecting the "new game" option. Press **CTRL** and "+" (Plus Sign) for instant win!

## HOUSE OF THE DEAD

### Cheat codes

At the main menu, hold Ctrl and type:

**SKIDMARX** - Enable Cheat and Edit Char Stats options

**CREATURE** - Enable Creature Test

## MAGESLAYER

### Cheat codes

To use the codes type them in at the console. Press the ~ key to bring up the console.

**impulse 11** - Invulnerability

**ode to jack** - Kill all enemies

**impulse 10** - Big magic attack

**fly** - Fly mode toggle (press jump key to fly)

**dir maps** - List available levels

**map x** - (Where x is the level name) Level warp

**noclip** - No clipping mode toggle

**impulse 43** - Suicide

**impulse 69** - Another suicide

## M.A.X. 2

### Cheat codes

During the game type the following.

**[maxspy]** - see all enemies. (including animals)

**[maxstorage]** - get maximum raw material.

**[maxsurvey]** - see all deposits on the map.

**[maxsuper]** - MAXES out highlighted unit.



## MECH COMMANDER

### Cheat codes

Go to the game directory and rename the file "windows.fit" to **buymechcommander.2** then during game play type:

**lorrie**: This restores ammo and armour.

**osmiu**: This puts you in god mode.

Change your mechcommander folder name to **buymechcommander2**

In addition when playing the game, hold shift and type these cheats:

**GOLDMECH**: money

**ULTRACOMMANDERFORGEINHEAT**: unlimited dropweight

**ATLASAWESOMETACTICAL**: get all robots

## STARCRAFT

### Cheat codes

Hit **ENTER** and type:

**game over man**: Instant loss

**man over game**: instant win

**power overwhelming**: god mode

**medieval man**: upgrade all units

**show me the money**: Gives 10,000 minerals and 10,000 vespene gas

**operation cwal**: Quick build

**the gathering**: Infinite energy

**noglues**: Enemies can't use magic

**there is no cow level**: level skip

**staying alive**: allows you to play after level is complete

**whats mine is mine**: Gives you 500 minerals

**breathe deep**: Gives you 500 vespene gas  
**something for nothing**: Everything available is upgraded

**black sheep wall**: Reveals entire map  
**modify the phase variance**: Ability to build anything

**war aint what it used to be**: Disables fog of war

**food for thought**: Allows you to build more units than supply allows

**ophelia**: Warp to any mission (type ophelia, hit enter, then type the level number)



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## A game a day helps you work rest and play

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## NAG BEGONE

**Q** Pleeeeeeeese help me. I'm just a little annoyed with that stupid "Are you sure you want to delete?" message everytime I delete a file, or when you delete Exe files. Like, would I press delete if I wasn't sure? It really sucks when you clear out your hard drive to delete lots of files. Is there a registry hack to do it?

**Richard Manly, NSW**

**A** Darn good question. I don't think anyone's actually hacked the registry to handle this 'Big brother Bill is watching you' attitude, but rest assured you're not the only one who hates this.

And, as it happens, you don't need a registry hack anymore anyway if you move to Windows 98. In Windows 98 the Recycle Bin has an option to disable the 'delete confirmation dialogue box'. Woohoo! Sounds good hey? But here's the catch — you can only disable the confirmation boxes if you leave the Recycle Bin enabled — that is, deleted files take up space on your hard drive in the Recycle Bin. If, like most power users, you disable the Recycle Bin (the 'Do not move files to the Recycle Bin' option) so that when you delete files, they're gone for good, you can't disable delete box confirmation. Gee, thanks for the choice Microsoft. When are they going to learn?

## QUESTIONING IE4

**Q** In Internet Explorer 4 (IE4) there is a history menu (I'm sure you know what I'm talking about), anyway, how do you change the history which is there? Eg. say I went to [www.hyperactive.com.au](http://www.hyperactive.com.au) (really useful site) and didn't want to keep it in history, how would I take it out? I've tried using regedit but that doesn't work.

Also, is there any easy way to use IE4 and

Netscape sharing bookmarks/favourites etc and if there isn't is there another way and what is it?

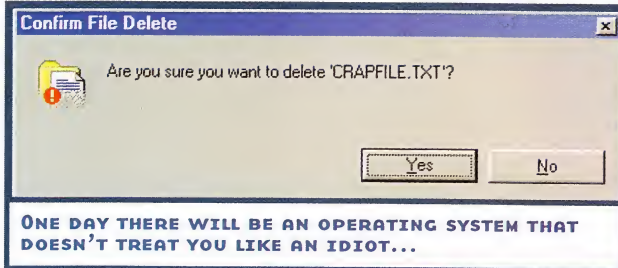
One more question! I have memory problems and that is that the files I have on my hard disk drive are taking up too much space on my HDD. I think I need to defragment my HDD but I have heard about it being unsafe. Do I need to defragment my HDD and is it safe to do so?

**John Baas WA**

**A** Under IE4's settings you'll find one called 'History' which lets you set the number of days recently visited Web pages are kept in the history list, or you can clean the list completely. As for sharing bookmarks between IE4 and Netscape, both browsers can import a bookmark list, but you can't have one bookmark list that both browsers use. Netscape, for one, stores the bookmark list under the name of whatever user is currently using it, and that's under the Netscape tree.

Lastly, for disk space there's only one solution — delete files. It's easy, really, just give it a try. It's amazing how much junk some people keep on their system. Just go through your drive using Explorer and delete those files, programs and games you know you won't use anymore.

Defragmenting your disk will not give you space back, it'll just reduce the chances of losing data and speed up your drive access. Yes, it's possible to lose files



files using ancient DOS copy programs and play games that support null modems, the better choice is a pair of network cards. While forking out dough for two network cards, cable, terminators and T-junctions will cost around \$100, they're easy to install and configure and provide much faster performance than you could hope to achieve using a serial cable. Also, if you get network cards your network is easily expanded when pals drop around with their PCs and network cards, you just add them in and play away. Serial cables will allow you to transfer data, slowly, via serial copy programs, but this isn't a network. Windows won't make use of it. If you want to share files, copy fast and play fast games all in Windows, you'll need network cards.

## RAMDRIVES AND MEMORY

**Q** I own a Celeron 266 with 128MB RAM. I've got a couple of questions: Is the Celeron CPU impeded when it comes to playing games? Or does it perform like a normal PII266? What is the best setting for a RAM drive if allocated? What else should I load in the RAM drive? I have set

*"The Celeron isn't a gamer's CPU, leave it to the low-end workstations it was designed for"*

if your machine happens to lose power while it's writing to the drive, but the same can be said for writing any file from any application when a power cut hits. Defragmenting is a safe process.

## NETWORK OR SERIAL?

**Q** I have two computers, a Pentium 133Mhz 16Mb RAM and a IBM 233Mhz 32Mb of RAM. I am thinking about connecting the two with either a network or serial cable. I was just wondering which one will be the way to go. I will be needing it mostly to play games so which will be the cheapest, which will be the fastest and easiest to install? I will only need about 10m of cable so how much will that cost? Can you still transmit data through a serial cable?

**Graeme Lucas Internet**

**A** The cheapest will be a parallel cable, or serial null modem. But since all this will allow you to do is to share

Win95 not to use any virtual memory.

**Alex C Brisbane, QLD**

**A** Ye gads! Disabling virtual memory is as big a no-no as asking your mother if your girlfriend can stay over for the night. Yes, that's very naughty indeed.

First things first — why do you have a ramdrive? The thing with ramdrives is that they're incredibly useful, for a few very limited purposes. Having the RAM, as you do, to create the RAM drive is all well and good, but there's no point storing anything in it that you write to because, obviously, that information will be lost when the machine is turned off. And there's little point in storing anything in it that you intend to read frequently, because you have to read it at least once off your hard drive to get it into the ramdrive, so why not just read it always from your hard drive?

Ramdrives are very cool, but their use is limited to temporary storage, and only if you need the speed ramdrive access



offers. For a home PC, there's nothing you'll need it for.

Back to the virtual memory. It doesn't matter if you've got a 128M beast, a time may come where your memory runs out (playing a rather beefy game or two, running lots of applications at once, being a game server, who knows) and when this happens, your machine will just grind to a halt if Windows can't swap out memory to disk. Even though your virtual memory may rarely be accessed with a 128M RAM system, it WILL be accessed sometimes, and if it's not there, you know you can't blame Windows when your machine crashes.

Oh yeah, and the Celeron question? Yes, it will be impeded for games, sometimes quite dramatically. The Celeron is considerably cheaper than a normal PII for a very good reason — it just doesn't cut the mustard like a PII can. The Celeron isn't a gamer's CPU, leave it to the low-end workstations it was designed for. Since games are very CPU and FPU intensive applications, a large and fast Level 2 cache can make a world of difference.

## IT'S A GAMERS LIFE

**Q** I decide to write this letter to you because I had it up to here about 3Dfx cards are needed for all hardcore gamers? That's wrong! Day in and day out I play games over and over again. I don't have a 3Dfx card - I've only got a Pentium 100 with 850Mb HDD, 14.4 modem and a Logitech Wingman joystick, is that all you need to be a hardcore gamer? Or do you need Pentium 2 300mhz 8.7 gig harddrive Voodoo2 3Dfx card and 56.6 modem and the biggest mother of god screen? Our do you just have to have no social life what so ever (except the ride to the

local games shop and back again) your regular diet's bakebeans, spaghetti from the can, noodles, fastfood or anything quick and easy?

**Luke "Lowman" Huryn**  
Internet

**A** Yes, Luke, you do need a P2 300MHz, 8.7G hard drive, Voodoo2 3Dfx card, a 56.6k modem and one heck of a sexy big monitor to be a true hardcore gamer, don't you have one too? And yep, you don't need to have a social life either, and yep your regular diet is canned food, delivered food, fast food and the scrapings from last night's pizza box. Bar the system, you know the routine well Luke! You'll get there one day, you'll be a hardcore gamer like the rest of us. Just use the force Luke, use the force...

## HIGH RESOLUTION REFRESH

**Q** I have a 17 inch Mirage monitor which is perfectly capable of having refresh rates higher than 60Hz, but it seems my 4MB Mystique 220 won't let me. Do I need more video RAM or is there another way around this? My current windows settings are 1024 x 768 @ 16bit color. I have two systems currently networked via the Micra Digital ISA games connection kit. The systems are P2 300, 128MB RAM Mystique 220, 12MB Monster 3D 2 and a Pentium 233MMX, 32MB RAM, ET6000 4MB, 12MB Monster 3D 2. I need to know realistically what performance I'll get if I run Unreal on the P233 @ 640 x 480. Finally, as I have converted to Windows 98, do the same performance enhancing tips you have given us (ie VCACHE) apply to that version?

**Jim Morris**  
Internet

**A** Your Mystique 220 4M is certainly capable of giving you 1024x768x16bitx75 and above, and if you're sure it's not the monitor at fault (you'll need a super expensive monitor to get anything larger than 75MHz at 1024 and above) then I can only suggest you make sure you've got the latest drivers installed. Matrox drivers come with their own Control Panel applet now and setting the correct monitor and refresh rate is easy.

As for Unreal, you'll get quite good performance on a P233 with a Voodoo2 at 640 and above, though not as fast and smooth as your P2 machine.

Your last question is a

# Tech Tips

## Personalise your PC with quick & easy tweaking tips

### NEED FOR SPEED

If you're after a quick, cheap and easy way to boost your hard disk speed (through enlarged windows buffers), in Windows 95, go to System Properties - Start - Settings - Control Panel - System) and click on the Performance tab. Next click on File System, and where it says "Typical role of this machine," select Network Server! Also, if you haven't already done so, adjust Read-ahead Optimization to Full, and the settings in the CD-ROM tab to their maximum configurations.

**Matthew Lee**  
Internet

### QUICK START

A while back you told us all an easy way to edit the start menu in Win 95. Well I have found an even easier way. Just go to the start menu and right click on it, then choose "open". The start menu will now open like any other folder and can be edited as you would any other folder. Anyway, have fun with it and see you around sometime.

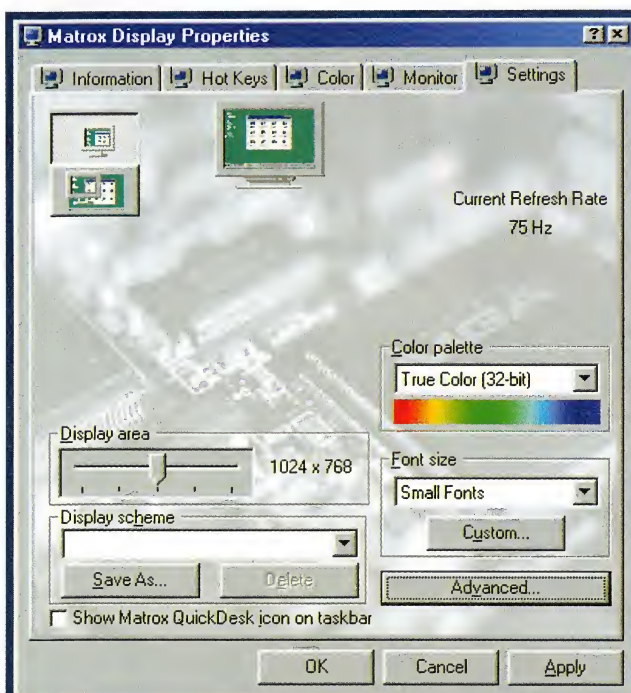
**The Fish**  
Internet

### BYE BYE INTERLACE

Here's a tip I'm sure you and all PCPP readers would like. To get rid of interlaced video in Origin games just add "no\_interlace" to the command line in the shortcut. This works on just about every Origin game I know of that has interlaced video for the intro and cut scenes.

**James Hyde**  
Internet

very interesting one indeed. As it happens Windows 98 does a good job of managing its VCACHE memory, so much so that I'd recommend you let Windows handle it. With Windows 98 the disk cache doubles as an application launch space, meaning memory isn't wasted copying an application from the disk cache into RAM — it's just launched directly from the cache. It's a very nifty idea that means speed and better memory allocation, whilst still giving the benefits of a large self-sizing disk cache. Microsoft call this MapCache, and the technical term for it is Memory Mapped I/O. It means you're likely to see your disk cache being larger than it was in Windows 95, but you should notice a distinct performance improvement. The tips for the swapfile, however, still apply.



**THE MATROX DRIVERS MAKE SETTING RESOLUTION AND REFRESH RATES EASY.**



# TECH WARS

## Unreal vs. Quake 2

**A comparison between Unreal and Quake 2 reveals that their effects engines are programmed with 2 different mindsets. Both are utterly brilliant but very different.**

**T**he observation that can be made about the Quake engine is that Carmack loves polygons and the fine control that 3D programming allows. Everything in Quake 2 is a polygonal object. That is to say, the entire environment is built upon 3D objects. The torch in Quake 2 is an animated 3D object. When you move around it, a different angle to the flame will be perceivable. This practice extends in Quake 2 - fire a rocket and you've expelled a fully 3D object, with a smoke trail consisting of elliptical objects creating the particle 3D effect in Quake 2.

This polygonal method is quite a contrast to Unreal. It has taken lessons learnt from older sprite-driven engines such as Duke Nukem 3D and used a series of advanced sprite techniques to create the incredible effects seen in Unreal.

A common technique with 3D accelerators is an ability for them to display animated textures. It hasn't been used a whole lot yet, but Unreal has utilised this function more than any other.

The Unreal torch, for example, isn't actually a 3D object at all. Instead, it's 2 translucent animated textures, the 2 textures being the burning flame. However, by being translucent, it seems more realistic because the flame appears to be more gaseous than solid. Also, the 2 textures are cleverly arranged to form an X so that no matter

what angle you're looking from the flame appears a lot more 3D than it actually is.

These animated textures appear in numerous forms around Unreal. The gas leaking from the crashed ship at the beginning of the game for example. It's extremely simple to incorporate and yet most people will stop to watch it in amazement. A 3D purist could argue that particles would be more realistic as textures are 2D and flat.

Unreal's answer to this is particularly clever. All points of the game where this effect is apparent will always be in a position where the player can't move around it. Watch for them and note that said textures will always appear at the end of a corridor or somewhere out of reach. This ensures that the illusion can't be shattered by walking past what equates to a 2D cardboard cut out.

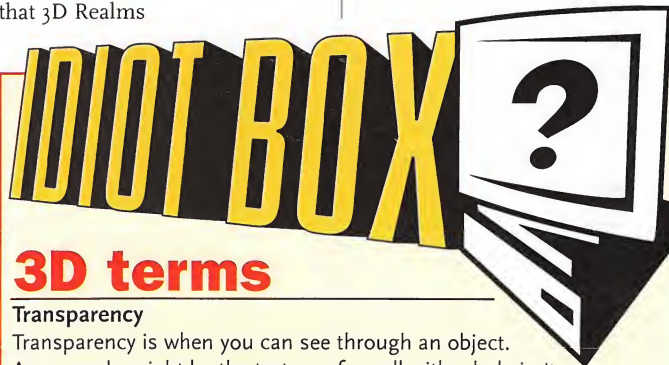
Lens Flare is another predominant factor of Unreal that adds tremendous atmosphere to the game at a negligible 3D price. The lens flare that you see is nothing more than a bright translucent texture. When the program detects a light source in the players vicinity, it quickly places a circular translucent object over the light. By being translucent, it creates a glow around the light source and gives off a highly atmospheric lens flare with virtually no CPU processing required. Finally, Unreal completes its fantastic use of animated textures with weapon discharges. As opposed to Quake which launches a 3D object with particles creating smoke effects, Unreal uses a clever combination of textures and 3D objects. One of the best uses of this technology is the pistol in Unreal. Fire a shot and an animated smoke texture will



appear on the wall, followed by a shell case (3D object) being ejected that "pings" around the ground. Other excellent examples are the rocket launcher, which fires an actual 3D object, but uses a series of animated textures to create the smoke effect.

Quake 2 lives on, there's no doubt. But it's also no surprise that 3D Realms

were so quick to move over to the Unreal engine for Duke Forever. It simply uses such a brilliant combination of animated textures and real polygonal 3D. So efficient is this process that you get more environment and more effects than the totally polygonal Quake 2 engine. Viva la Unreal!



### 3D terms

#### Transparency

Transparency is when you can see through an object. An example might be the texture of a wall with a hole in it. The hole within the texture would act as a hole does, allowing what's behind the object to be seen.

#### Translucency

Translucency is like transparency, except that the background inherits the colours of the translucent object. An example of this would be coloured glass, or coloured cellophane.

#### Animated textures

A texture is a 2 dimensional "skin" used to give a 3 dimensional object detail. A decal from a plastic model kit is a good example of a texture. Animated textures then are the same 2D skins but animated. If a TV was made into a 3D object, then an animated texture could become the screen and give it the appearance of its real world counterpart.





## SPECULAR SPOTLIGHT

This month's game in the spotlight is Ultima Ascension (IX). A lot of promises have been broken with Ascension, the removal of a party of characters for example. However, Origin might just be able to make up for this with the stunning 3D brilliance Ascension will offer. The effects are staggering and the "ring of fire" spell in particular looks fantastic. Texturing is also absolutely amazing with character faces more striking than in any other 3D game.



An outdoor environment, beautiful 3D castle, multiple polygonal people and a beautifully rendered tree. Can even Unreal compete with this level of 3D complexity.



This close up of Janna shows that Ascension's character polygons are the most complex ever in a game. Just look at her nose and lips, they're perfect.



Look at the sky and the complexity of the hill this battle is taking place on.

## Quick Bytes



### GLDOOM

Doom fanatics that wish to relive their glory days will be pleased to know that the maker of WinDoom is now working on GLDoom. The environment is true to the original, meaning

that it looks rather dated. The GL version will however allow Doom to run at 1024 x 768.

### UNREAL 209 PATCH

Unreal has now been patched to V209 which improves A3D sound support and most importantly improves Internet play.

### QUAKE 2 FUN PHYSICS FACT

In a recent interview with John Carmack he reported that in Q2, you accelerate from 0 to 27 mph in 1/30 of a second, now that's a fit 'n' fast marine!

## 3DTech News

**S3 save their poor reputation with an adequate new chip and Unreal's technology leaves Quake in the 3D dust**

### S3 Savage 3D

News in from S3 is of the new and possibly exciting Savage 3D, which is the word on the lips of all people associated with the 3D industry. Here's a snippet from the press release with an in depth analysis to come when we get one to review: "Targeted at the high-end PC market, S3's Savage3D™ accelerator is a newly designed multimedia solution focussed on setting a new standard for 2D, 3D and DVD/video acceleration. Delivering the industry's highest 3D quality and performance, the 128-bit Savage3D accelerator achieves an unprecedented 125 M-pixels per second through its single cycle trilinear architecture; and delivers more than 4x AGP performance through its newly designed AGP engine and Microsoft-endorsed texture compression technology."

### STB Nitro DVD

STB have been hard at work with a new card that could be

an extremely worthy AGP solution for the new Pentium 2 owner. The Nitro has a lot to offer. Its 2D output in particular, besides being decidedly fast, features a 230Mhz RAM-DAC with a maximum refresh rate of 200Hz - now that's flicker free.

On the 3D side the Nitro utilises the Chromatic Mpac 3D chipset. New to our labs here at Graphics Tech, the Mpac is definitely a feature rich 3D accelerator. Its abilities include bi and trilinear filtering, fogging and depth cueing, Double buffering, diffuse lighting, specular lighting and a vast number of other functions that place it in the league of a Voodoo. In terms of speed however, the Nitro only really comes in just faster than a V2200.

This is a primary card, and as we've discussed many times, should be merited on its multimedia functionality, leaving 3D acceleration of course in the capable hands of 3Dfx. Here the Nitro offers its greatest ability, that of hardware DVD playback built into the card. On a P2 266, the Nitro will play full DVD titles at 30fps. DVD offering superb video playback and CD quality sound is indeed a desirable option. With titles such as Starfleet Academy and Blade Runner being re-released in DVD format, cards such as the STB with hardware playback should definitely be high on the purchase list.



# PC PowerPlay HOT HARDWARE

**What the hell is MULTIMEDIA anyway?**

**Lights! Sounds! Action!**

**You want THE BEST though.**

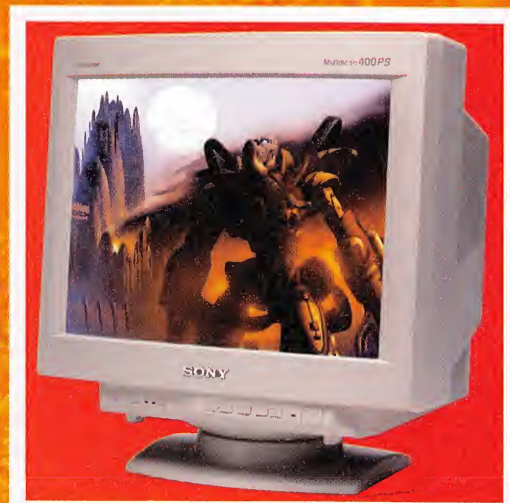
**Like a custom-built street rod, today's gaming PC is a lovingly crafted collection of state of the art technologies.**

**The PC PowerPlay HOT HARDWARE GUIDE is your source for all that's HOT.**

**Graphics accelerator cards, 3D sound cards, super-fast motherboards, pumping speakers - ALL TESTED with Best Buy recommendations. Plus Beginner's Guides for everything from setting up a network to squeezing extra speed from your so-called "standard" system.**

**Discover PC gaming hardware that's HOT.**

## Out in October.





# The scream of the VOODOO BANSHEE

Famous for the World's Fastest 3D, 3Dfx can now claim the same for 2D.

## Banshee

- Voodoo 2 3D core
- 128Bit 2D Engine (including 128bit VGA core)
- 128bit Memory Interface
- 4 to 16MB SGRAM/SDRAM
- 100/125MHz Operation
- 100/125 Megapixel's per second fill rate
- 100/125 Megatexel's per second fill rate
- Hardware based Triangle Setup engine capable of 4 Million Polygons per second (processor limited)
- AGP with Sidebanding or PCI 66MHz interface options

**3**Dfx have finally released information regarding their latest addition to the Voodoo graphics range. This card, like the Voodoo Rush chipset, is aimed at the single chip 2D/3D market. But unlike the Voodoo Rush, the Banshee, as it's known, will be a 2D/3D chip to be taken seriously.

We all know that a lot of people were disappointed with the Voodoo Rush's entry into the 2D/3D combo arena. The Voodoo Rush was not as fast as a stand-alone Voodoo card, Quake-wise. Well actually it wasn't that bad, but some people were expecting Voodoo I power at least. 3Dfx hope to change all that with the Banshee. Just glimpsing over the specifications and benchmarks will confirm this. You might be saying to yourself that other companies

make these big announcements about performance too, but when the cards actually ship they don't perform to the manufacturer's claims. I believe 3Dfx are different; when they announce performance figures people believe them, I know I do. They certainly shocked everyone when the original Voodoo cards were released.

### The 2D performance of the Banshee

Not only will Banshee's 3D perform slightly faster than a single Voodoo 2, but the 2D acceleration provided by the 128bit wide 2D engine will be astounding. Every single GDI call will be accelerated in hardware, providing mind blowing ultra fast

screen refreshes. 3Dfx have provided the public with early benchmark results done using Winbench 98 to give us an idea of what sort of speeds the Banshee will be able to attain. All tests were performed at 1024x768 with 65535 colours.

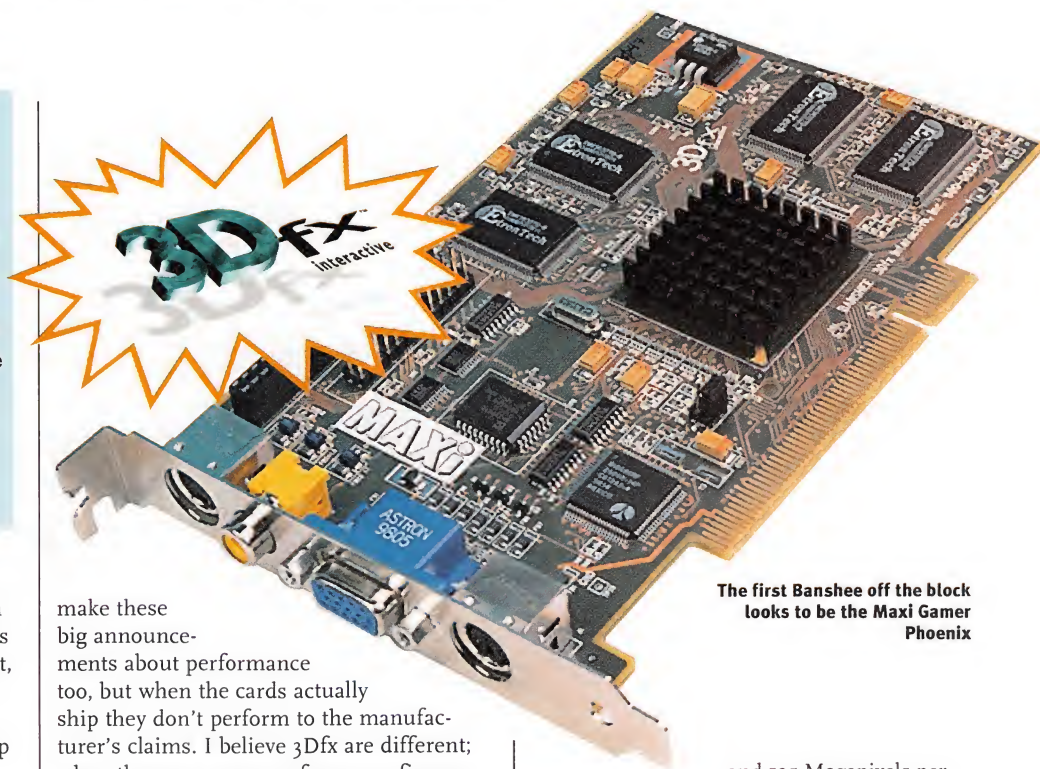
### The Banshee 3D magic

As well as the awesome 2D abilities of the Banshee, it has mind blowing 3D capabilities too. With a Fill Rate of 100 Megapixels per second for SGRAM

and 125 Megapixels per second for SDRAM the Banshee certainly holds its own when it comes to raw throughput. Banshee will offer all of the 3D rendering features that the Voodoo II has, but will be a single chip solution. The benchmark figures that 3Dfx have released for showing off the Banshee's 3D speed are calculated with a system called GameGauge. GameGauge uses six common 3D games: Forsaken, Turok, F22 ADF, Incoming, GL Quake and Quake2. Then, from the average frames per second from each game, they are averaged into an overall score. I would have preferred to see actual game frame rates but this will have to do for now.

The Banshee certainly looks very nice indeed. Although the Banshee will be quicker than a single Voodoo 2, two Voodoo 2's in SLI can't be beaten, with an effective fill rate of 180 Megapixels per second. Still, these performance figures should mean that it will perform in the range of the Riva TNT and maybe the Savage3D from S3. The Banshee will not only compete well 3D-wise with these chips, but will also have mind blowing 2D performance. It must be said that 3Dfx have released these performance figures themselves using very early model reference boards, so until we actually get a board with one of these chips, we can't verify them. I look forward to pushing one of these boards to its limit. Expect extensive tests of this card from PC PowerPlay in the very near future. Until they're released, we'll just have to dream once again of Voodoo magic.

Garry Wallis



The first Banshee off the block looks to be the Maxi Gamer Phoenix

## Game Gauge Graphics test suite

|                |     |
|----------------|-----|
| Permedia 2     | 174 |
| Power VR       | 175 |
| Rage Pro       | 213 |
| Verite V2200   | 219 |
| Riva 128       | 253 |
| Intel 740 ref  | 269 |
| Voodoo Banshee | 486 |

Great Scott! The Banshee simply destroys the 3D opposition

## Winbench 98 Business Graphics test suite

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| Intel 740 ref    | 164 |
| Thriller 3D      | 186 |
| #9 Revolution 3D | 193 |
| Rage Pro         | 202 |
| FireGL 1000 Pro  | 210 |
| Viper 330        | 215 |
| Millennium II    | 225 |
| Voodoo Banshee   | 260 |

Who would have thought that 3Dfx would release the fastest 2D card in the world!



# Net Game News

What's going down, online

**N**et gaming has become such a wild and untamed beast of late, that we're dedicating at least one page a month exclusively to all things net gaming related. What out there is worth playing? Where's the action? Is there life after deathmatch? What's a modem? I keep getting creamed by a sassy kid on the other side of the world who keeps typing "ha ha, you suck", what can I do? All these questions and more will be answered in this very section.

All we need is a bit of feedback from you. Got any questions you want answered? Want to rant on about your favourite multiplayer experience? Email Net Game News at [ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au](mailto:ngn@pcpowerplay.next.com.au)

## We want what you like

We want to know what you like to play online. Email Net Game News with your nomination and each month we'll publish the 5 most played online games out there. For this month, the chart is made up of, in no particular order, the games we here at PC PowerPlay like to get into in our spare time.

- Quake/Quake II
- Total Annihilation
- Masters of Orion II
- Starcraft
- Ultima Online

## Readers Write

Last month we took a look at the various online services provided, both free and subscription based. This month we answer a letter from an eager Quaker that doesn't seem to be getting any luck with his net connection.

**Q** My problem is this, I got Quake II a few months ago as well as the Internet and I began searching for a Quake II server, I discovered painfully, the plague known as "lag". So I set out to discover some Australian Quake II Servers, I came across some people when I was chatting and they told me to get GameSpy, which I did. I also got the patch for Quake II, and after the whole night downloading I discovered that... THE PING ON EVERY GAME WAS OVER 500! So I once again set out to discover some playable servers. I came across people who told me to try a certain Online Gaming service. I went there and found out that to play online, I have to pay a fee of \$40 a month! Anyway, I doubt everyone does that so if you guys know any servers that won't have pings upward of 350, please tell me!

Matthew Fathers

**A** First off, the reason for the high ping times probably has little to do with the servers themselves. Most likely it's the modem you're using, or the overall quality of

the ISP you're connecting with, or both. As you're connecting to your ISP using a modem, it's the most important element in getting a good connection. If it's anything less than a 33.3 Kbps modem, there's your problem. The 33.3Kbps is the real minimum, and the 56Kbps is the standard for Net gaming today. Then there's the ISP, which is the server that allows you to access other host computers or servers. If it's using dated hardware and has a bad connection overall, it can be the other major factor affecting ping times. So a good quality ISP is another must to ensure a decent connection, which unfortunately usually means a heftier subscription fee.

The other alternative for Net play is subscribing to an online gaming service. Ping times are almost always good, and you'll generally always find people to play with. The \$40 quote you received must be an old one, because both the current local services charge \$10 and \$20 a month. Not exactly an arm and a leg for consistently good quality connections to the net.



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**Wireplay** The games network

- About Wireplay
- Games & Downloads
- Competitions
- The Underworld
- Related Links
- Media Resources
- Help & Support

**Wireplay Australia Home**

**Attention Wirequakers: A message from Wireplay Manager, Doug Roy**

If you play Quake or Quake 2 on the Wireplay Servers, and are concerned with connection difficulties or lag problems you have been experiencing, you will want to read this statement from Wireplay Manager, Doug Roy.

**Sign Up With Wireplay, Get a New Release Game!**

Really! It's that simple. In conjunction with our special radio promotion, all you have to do is sign up for a new Wireplay account, and you will get a new game, valued at \$90, absolutely free! More details here.

**ANNIHILATION**

**FORSAKEN**

**Wireplay Invading Brisbane!**

We've just upgraded our Quake 2 servers to version 3.17 - the latest and gr

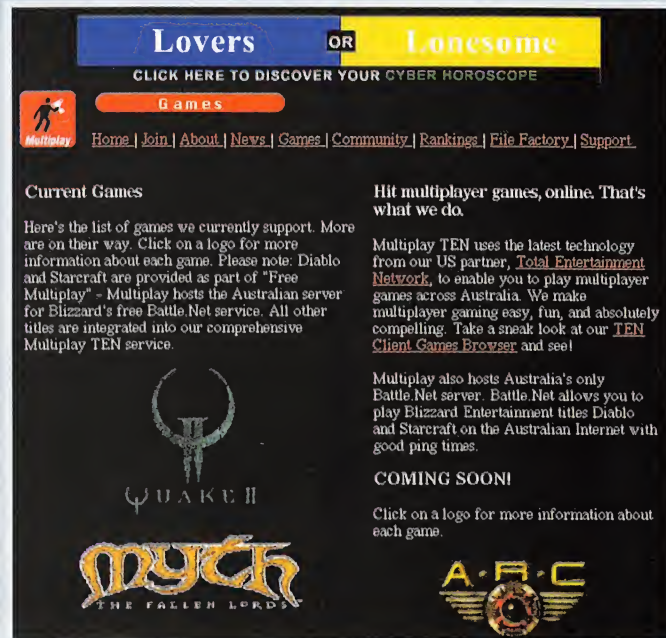
**News Archive**

**WIREPLAY JOIN NOW!**

**MESSAGE BOARD**

**And In Other News...**

Wireplay Quake 2 Servers are now all v3.17



**Lovers OR Lonesome**

CLICK HERE TO DISCOVER YOUR CYBER HOROSCOPE

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**Current Games**

Here's the list of games we currently support. More are on their way. Click on a logo for more information about each game. Please note: Diablo and Starcraft are provided as part of "Free Multiplay" - Multiplay hosts the Australian server for Blizzard's free Battle.Net service. All other titles are integrated into our comprehensive Multiplay TEN service.

**Hit multiplayer games, online. That's what we do.**

Multiplay TEN uses the latest technology from our US partner, Total Entertainment Network, to enable you to play multiplayer games across Australia. We make multiplayer gaming easy, fun, and absolutely compelling. Take a sneak look at our [TEN Client Games Browser](#) and see!

Multiplay also hosts Australia's only Battle Net server. Battle Net allows you to play Blizzard Entertainment titles Diablo and Starcraft on the Australian Internet with good ping times.

**COMING SOON!**

Click on a logo for more information about each game.

**QUAKE II**

**MYTH THE FALLEN LORDS**

**A.R.C**

**Multiplay and Wireplay - both have significantly adjusted their pricing structure lately, so it's much more affordable now. Both services offer a wide range of games and low ping times**

## Next month:

We take an in depth look at the many games to play online, as well as the countless number of mods released changing original release games as we know them.

March 'Polvo' Stepnik



# WWW.RIPOFF.COM

## The Good, Bad and Ugly of Game News Sites

George Argy discovers that everyone's an expert on the net.

**O**K, so what exactly is a game insider site? Basically, we're looking at a Web site that is devoted to hosting news, rumours, files and anything else of interest for a particular game.

Some sites spread themselves thinly over every game there is, others concentrate on a genre, while still others focus on one game only. The truly hardcore spring up when a game is just announced by a publisher, and stay around well after its release, keeping the community up to date. This, dear optimist, is the theory.

The hard, cold truth is that any wannabe with a modem and a copy of MS Frontpage or any other HTML-in-a-box can set up a site and declare it "THE source for your [insert generic game] needs". Internet newbies and those seeking information on a particular game, or even those who just want to read the news like they would the Sunday papers can quite easily get lost in the myriad of effluent flowing through the World's Largest Data Sewer.

### Out there

Trying to separate reputable online publications from netta bloids is no easy task. Thankfully, I have so much time on my hands that I've done it for you. Here's a look at the broad spectrum, from independent publications (ie. poor but talented) to the commercial guys (unfortunately, money can buy talent).

### Blue's News

(<http://www.bluesnews.com>)

Blue's started out as a Quake-only rag but then moved on to Quake II news and has recently started covering pretty much anything, although First-Person shooters always take preference. The layout can be a little confusing to wade through at times as Mr Blue holds a whole week's worth of information on one page as news snippets, then archives the rest. The file area is reasonably comprehensive but nowhere near as huge as other sites — this is a news site after all. Still, Blue's is probably one of the most respected of the independent sites.

### Redwood's

(<http://redwood.stomped.com>)

Redwood's also started out as a Quake news site that has also spread to cover a few more games than Quake. Not hugely different to Blue's, and much of the news is repeated. The two sites have little tiffs now and then that make amusing reads - amazing how some people think petty internet differences are a big deal because they have a worldwide audience.

### Gameslice

(<http://www.gameslice.com>)

This site gives you a behind-the-scenes look at the game industry. Its quality journalism and excellent, incisive features make it a top read for anyone who's in, or who wants to be in the games industry.

### Gamers Extreme

(<http://www.gamers.com>)

Most righteous site containing a wealth of resources for the gamers that want to fine-tune their skills in a game, or simply learn how to pull the trigger. Their 'Bible' series is probably the best free playguides you will see, and they are written by gamers for gamers - the Quake/QuakeII ones were penned by the mighty Thresh!

### Planetquake

(<http://www.planetquake.com>)

Huge mega-monstrous site that started with humble Quake origins. Now spans what looks like the entire known gaming universe.

The main page is basically still Quake news and such, but PlanetQuake now hosts an obscene amount of Quake and non-Quake related games sites.



### GamePen.com

(<http://www.gamepen.com>)

A bit of everything really. News, reviews, previews, rants, raves, gossip, resources. Quite a comprehensive site that is well laid out and doesn't over-do it with the eye-candy.

### HARDgame.com

(<http://www.hardgame.com>)

A site devoted to the hardware



you NEED to play the games you WANT. Very informative and comprehensive, but also suffers from the one-huge-page syndrome. Oh, and very American.

### Inside Games

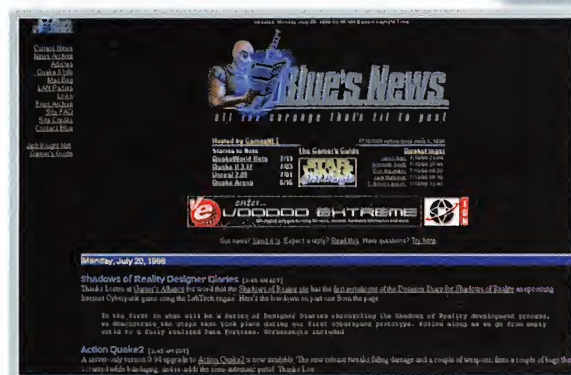
(<http://www.insidegames.com>)

Very nice online magazine that is, in my humble opinion, the way most magazines should be laid out. Very structured and easy to get where you want to go. Contains news, reviews, previews and features of all the latest games.

### Unreal.org

(<http://www.unreal.org>)

Unreal.org is a sad testament to what can happen when an independent games site is run on good intentions alone. It now stands as a tombstone site and a lesson to those who think they can do they something they truly believe in these days without selling out.





# WEBSTALK

Welcome once again to Webstalk, the only place on the planet where you'll find reviews of the best sites around. Keep on sending those sites to [spoonman@hunterlink.net.au](mailto:spoonman@hunterlink.net.au)

## EVAN'S STAR WARS CINEMA

<http://www.jedinet.com/cinema/>

One of the coolest star wars sites, in that it attempts to recreate what Star Wars would have been like if Quentin Tarantino had made it. The results are interesting to say the least. The only problem with it is that you're going to have to spend quite a while downloading before you get anything to watch. Its well worth the wait though. Presentation wise it's all fairly standard, but it's easy to navigate, and the site map looks extremely nice. Star Wars freaks and Tarantino fans alike should check it out. *Sent in by Camper Van*

**Content:** ★★★★★

**Site Design:** ★★★★★



## WHO DO YOU WANT TO PUNCH TODAY

<http://www.urban75.com/Punch/smackem.html>

If you're under stress and feel the need to take it out on those annoying Hansons, or the Spice things, then this is where you want to be. I believe the site is British so you won't know all that many of the names (David Beckham is the newest addition) but you still get your old favourites like Barney the Dinosaur and the Tele-Tubbies. This is actually part of another much larger site, but this bit is the best by far, basic to navigate and nice design. *Sent in by Ryan Smith*

**Content:** ★★★★★

**Site Design:** ★★★★★

## RIVA ZONE

<http://www.rivazone.com>

This should be the first port of call for anyone with a Riva128 based board. This site is chock full of news, reviews, previews, bug fixes, patches, message boards and more. It's also updated very regularly. While the site may look a little boring it's the content that counts, and RivaZone has it in buckets, including all the latest drivers and everything Riva. Don't miss it if you have one of these graphics cards. *Sent in by Donovan Glass*

**Content:** ★★★

**Site Design:** ★★★★★

## AUSMETAL

<http://www.ausmetal.net>

Sooner or later as a gamer you'll have to realise that you might need to develop some social skills. The best way to do this is listen to Metal (Spoonery, you're a FREAK! Ed.), and the best way to find out what Metal will be at what venue at what time is the AusMetal website. They

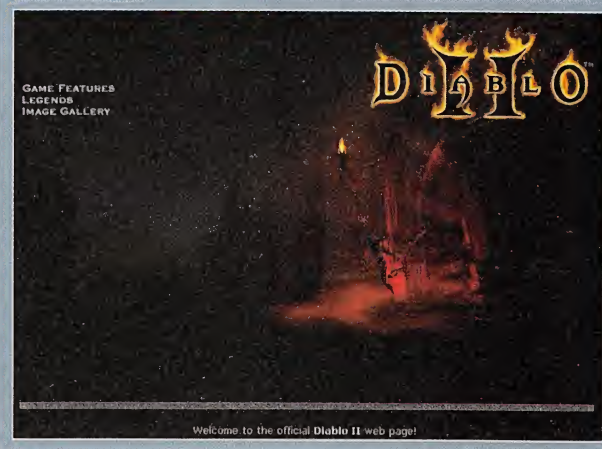
## OFFICIAL DIABLO II SITE

<http://www.blizzard.com/diablo2/>

Do you have questions regarding Diablo 2? For once, this official site will provide some answers. It currently contains cinematics and pictures as well as detailed information regarding features and Frequently Asked Questions. The site is obviously a professional job, with everything appearing just as it should do. The only problem being that we'll most probably have to watch nothing but screenshots until 1999. *Sent in by Tim Ormsby*

**Content:** ★★★★★

**Site Design:** ★★★★★



have detailed Gig Guides as well as a large MP3 archive so you can actually find out what these bands sound like. It's also Java enabled which is a nice touch (there is also a standard version for those with older browsers).

**Content:** ★★★★★

**Site Design:** ★★★★★







## Back Issues

\$12 each inc. postage and handling. Enquiries: ph: 02 9699 0311, fax: 02 9699 0334, [backissues@next.com.au](mailto:backissues@next.com.au)

#1 Online fighter combat, Duke 3D, Grand Prix 2, Warcraft 2 playguide.

#2 Kali net games, Earthsiege 2, Zork Nemesis, C&C playguide.

#3 3D graphic accelerators, Settlers 2, Cyberstorm, Zork Nemesis walkthrough.

#4 PC buyers guide, Australian Rugby League, Normality, Spycraft walkthrough.

#5 Net games, Time Commando, Close Combat, Civ 2 strategy guide.

#6 Best and worst games of all time, Quake, Pandora Directive, Flight sim roundup.

#7 Violence in games, Mechwarrior Mercenaries, Krush Kill 'n Destroy, MMX Pentiums

#8 Making of a Game, Video Card feature, C&C Red Alert, Privateer 2.

#9 Red Alert Feature, Alphaworld, Wavetable soundcards, Tomb Raider, Syndicate Wars.

#10 New Star Wars games, 3D accelerators compared, DIY Upgrade guide, Discworld 2

#11 Diablo, Interstate '76, MMX Pentiums examined, Build your own PC and network, Dark Reign.

#12 MDK, Quake Mission Packs, Huge Joystick guide, Internet Newsgroups, Ecstasia 2.

#13 Need for Speed II, X-Wing vs. TIE Fighter, Quake addons, PCs versus Consoles debate, Online game hackers.

#14 Dark Reign, Doom Clones, 16 Modems tested, Derek Smart, Comanche 3, Redneck Rampage.

#15 Carmageddon, E3 Report, Tomb Raider 2 preview, Blood & Sex

#16 Dungeon Keeper, RPG feature, Lands of Lore II preview, Virtual Reality, Last Express playguide

#17 Age of Empires, 500MHz Pentiums, Starfleet Academy, Beam Software, Software Piracy

#18 Jedi Knight, Total Annihilation, Hexen II, Quake addon megaguide

#19 Blade Runner, Tomb Raider 2, AFL '98, 3D CPUs, Quake 2 first look

#20 TOCA Touring Cars, Heavy Gear, FIFA '98, Next-Gen 3D cards, Dark Reign Playguide Pt.1

#21 Quake II, Intel's EPIC new CPU, I-War, Monkey Island 3, Multi vs Single player gaming debate, Dark Reign Playguide Pt.2

#22 Battlezone, 1GHz hot chips, Ultima Online Chronology & Tour guide, Starcraft Beta, Unreal, Quake 2 playguide

#23 Forsaken preview, Obsidian 3Dfx cards, i740 3D accelerators, Adventure, games, Red Baron II

#24 Tiberian Sun preview, Voodoo II cards benchtested, Blade Runner playguide, Rebellion, Incoming

#25 Starcraft, Forsaken, Motherboard Benchtest, Lifestyle of a True Gamer, Virtual Reality, Soccer Games

#26 Unreal, Modems benchtest, Starcraft strategy guide, PCI sound cards, DIY Web Page, Might & Magic VI, Player Killers

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# PC PowerPlay

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## WIN A 32 BIT PCI SOUND CARD!

The InnoVision Letter of the Month wins the new LEAF 32 bit/3D sound card, using the Maestro ESS Wavetable chipset. PCI 32 bit sound leaves old ISA Sound Blaster technology for dead, freeing your CPU for faster gameplay. Valued at \$199, ph InnoVision on 03 58318833 for more info, or visit [www.innovision.com.au](http://www.innovision.com.au).



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## Brotherly Love

I decided to write this letter after a conversation with my much younger brother. I have not bought him a game since Age Of Empires and after seeing your evaluation of Unreal, I thought I would write why. There have been some truly original games such as the Wing Commander series, Dune/C&C, Warcraft, Civ, Sim City, Doom, X-Wing, Theme Park, etc., which I have happily purchased. However, my dismay is at the total lack of originality with the software that is released. If it is not a clone of one, it is a clone of another.

Cases in point - Total Annihilation, Quake, Duke Nukem, Dark Reign, etc., etc., etc.. I thought that after reading your review I would go and buy T.A., but after 5 minutes I felt I had been here many times before - and for \$90.00, I think it was a waste of money. This is my reasoning, which I explained to my brother. You do not go out and buy another PC clone if you already own a computer that works fine do you? You do not go out and buy something the same because you are looking for a new gaming experience. I think that if software developers want to get \$90 out of people for a new game, they should be providing ORIGINAL gaming experiences. With the rapid advancement of technology

over the years, I feel that gamers should be demanding more and getting more for their money, and, if this is not so, the consumers should vote with their wallets and wait for some quality software. Well, this is the first time I have ever written to a magazine, but my frustration is at times unbearable. As I gently lower myself off my soapbox, I will not be buying Unreal as it seems software developers are turning into copycats, rather than coming up with original game genres.

**Cadfael**

*Clones are, sometimes, not as bad as you make out. Sure, there are those games that merely try to cash in upon another's success and offer nothing new or innovative. However, there are also games that broaden existing genres, or improve upon them, and we have no problem with these whatsoever. If only completely new games were released, then there wouldn't be very many to choose from - we'd still be playing Dune2 today, rather than choosing from TA, Dark Reign, BattleZone, Tiberium Sun, StarCraft, Warcraft 2 (to name but a few), for example. Having said that, we agree that there aren't enough original games nowadays. The ideas are there, but the corporatisation of the games industry means that it's a much safer bet for the money men to give the green light to a 'clone' title than an unknown and untested 'new' genre. Sad, really.*

## Parenting vs. Gaming

I have a really bad problem. My parents seem to have this idea that I shouldn't be able to use the computer on the weekdays, and it is driving me insane! Even on the weekends, when I am allowed to use my machine, they make it even harder by limiting me to a meagre four hours a day. FOUR HOURS!

How am I supposed to complete Starcraft on that sort of time scale! They do this because they say that I don't do anything else, which is a lie, because I do sleep occasionally, and if I'm in a good mood I just might go to school :). I'm only 15, so unfortunately leaving home is not an option. Anyway, can you guys or someone else pleeeassee tell them that they are weird and completely wrong, and that they are depriving me of an essential Quake 2 experience? Does anyone out there have this

## INNOVISION LETTER OF THE MONTH

### Online Societies

Your July comment on "Online Anarchy" in multiplayer RPGs was very interesting. However, I would say that player killing is possible to stop, or at least contain. Think about humanity's social history - while the "Wild West" was certainly wild, most people could and did live their lives in comparative peace. Similarly the ancient Greek or Italian city-states periods, where there were continual wars, feuds and adventuring. What games like Ultima are missing at present is the social obligations and realities that temper aggressive behaviour.

If we look at the Wild West, which we all know so well through John Wayne movies, what do we find? If you live in a remote, pioneering area, law has less meaning there. But go to the bigger towns, and you can go down the street in perfect safety. Why? Because laws are enforced, the community pays to have enforcers, there are rewards posted for wrong-doers, which also gives rise to bounty hunters who chase down desperadoes. Additionally, a known criminal will have trouble finding places to stay (they would be reported for the reward), places to purchase supplies (and pay more for it when they do), and people to trust. Look at "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" again if you want to see the effects of having a criminal reputation, and ending up on the run. The Mexicans shot them down in the end because of their reputation, and hence the reputation the Mexican Commander would gain, not because they tried to live a quiet life in Mexico and escape from their past. Even good old "Elite" (and later Privateer) had reputation included which changed game play to some degree.

The other aspect missing is the community nature of humans: we group into societies, which enforce behaviour, provide expectations and obligations. If we meet someone new, we tend to base our expectations at least partially on their family and society background. So when a new character is 'born' into an RPG, they typically should have a family, clan and tribe associations. These associations give them friends, places to shelter, opportunities for cheap training, and also enemies. There are also implications on their name: 'No son of mine will call himself 'Lord Knobnuts' - leave the tribe and never darken my doorway again', and losing all the benefits too. (Some examples of this in non-computer roleplaying are RuneQuest and Star Wars).

Perhaps the one factor different in RPGs is that in real life anyone can be killed by a single bullet or knife thrust. So a renegade tends to live in fear. By nature, most RPGs make your experienced character tougher, so that a single mistake doesn't finish the game. But if elite town-guards exist, and there are rewards for capture - alive or dead, so that other players join in, you can give RPG outlaws that same fear.

**John Leske**  
Adelaide

### Letter: Brotherly Love (pic: Dune2)





## Letter: Online Societies & The payment Continues



problem, and know what I can do about it? Ok, that's my complaining done, and I feel much better...NOT!

**David Waddingham a.k.a. (@)PAINBOY(@)**  
Perth

Well...we've got some bad news for you, David. Parents have this annoying habit of being right most of the time, and usually have your best interests at heart. You could always try that "If I'm home playing games then I'm not outside taking drugs and mugging old ladies" line, but it's not guaranteed to work. Worth a try though, especially if your parents watch commercial current affairs shows.

## The ethical Grunt Rush vs Bastard tactics

After Ashton Mills' fine article on pkillers I thought I'd chime in with my own two cents. The first game I ever played online was Warcraft 2 via Kali and the OzWL (Australian Warcraft2 League). Now, of course, in strategy games the bane of everyone's existence is the rusher (I believe the term originated with Warcraft 2, where we called them 'Grunt Rushers'), however I think there is always some conjecture as to the definition of a 'rusher'. I think attacking a player early in the game with basic units is an acceptable tactic

in many situations where it is in the spirit of the game. To site a specific example I was playing Starcraft the other day in a five player FFA (Free For All), and I soon discovered I was very close to another player. My first action was to aggressively attack that player very early on with the intention of either severely slowing their progress or destroying them outright. I believe this was fair as I attacked and destroyed them in attempt to remove a threat that would likely be a problem later in the game (being so close). This is a fair and understandable action and I wouldn't label it as a 'rush'. The perfect example of an unfair tactic that was not in the spirit of the game happened to me whilst playing Warcraft 2. It was a small map and I immediately set my lone peasant to work on a town hall. The other player, rather than building his own town hall, sent his peasant to where he knew my base was, waited for mine to emerge from building the town hall, and killed him. Game over. He wins. Gee, that was fun. Now that was a rush. What's the point of that? There was no long drawn out struggle for supremacy, no surprise attacks, no devious tactics, just one peasant hacking another to death. I think you can see my point.

**Daniel Ladiges (AKA Pop Rivit)**  
Email

## A fair price for games

I've been noticing a few letters appearing in your letters pages recently complaining about the price of games. Now, sure, I tend to agree that \$90 is a lot to pay for a game, but you've got to take into account the cost of making a game. Looking in your July issue there's the figures of Activision's turnover for the 3rd qtr 97/98 fiscal year, they turn over \$US122,141,000 and only make a measly \$US9,278,000. Surely people can see that that's \$US112,863,000 which has been spent either developing the game, paying for production or paying for PR. Now to expect companies to drop the price to \$50 or less from \$90 and 'possibly' turn over more units is good in theory but I dare say it's more than likely not to work. And if it doesn't work then it leaves companies out of pocket or it forces them to devote less money to their development budgets and we end up with more crud on the shelves.

People say that if you drop the price of the games then pirating will stop, well I like to think that there is 'honour among thieves'. That people who do pirate games don't pirate the games that they would be willing to fork over their hard earned \$\$ for if they didn't have a way of pirating the particular game, at least that way they know they're supporting develop-

ers they like and then just ripping off the people whose games they don't feel are worth their money. If this is the case (and I should hope it is) then dropping the price of the games isn't going to attract any of the pirates over to buying their games legitimately apart from that which they already do.

In any case, what I'm trying to say is, don't whinge too much about the cost of games because without our support at the high-ish prices, the games just won't be there for us to whinge about the price. There's no law for you to buy every game that comes out. Do what I do - swap games with mates and make sure you buy different ones. That way you can play everything and still afford to live.

**Adam"Staf"Stafford**  
Email

## Ultima Online - the payment continues

I remember when I first heard about UO in PCPP #7. I almost instantly fell in love with it, and feverishly gathered information. However, when the final product came out, despair set in. The first, and in my opinion the biggest, flaw of UO is the fact that you have to pay to subscribe. Not only needing a net connection (which you pay for) but also having to pay simply to play - this really isn't good enough. Origin said it would be free, and broke their promise. I really wouldn't have minded paying say \$120 up front, but I'm not gonna pay by the month. The other issue is the PK'ers. I honestly don't think that Origin have done enough to prevent this. I have some suggestions. Firstly - how about treating PK'ing as a skill, whereby the more often you kill a player the "better" the skill gets, however this skill reduces your overall abilities considerably. Using a system such as this would mean that players would still be able to kill each other, but only because they "need" to (ie. the example of the thief and hero situation in this month's issue). At the very least PK'ing should have a negative effect on the killer. There is also the issue of players using both warez lingo and duped items. Both detract from the game, and certainly in the latter instance Origin should think about either suspending players, wiping the players



## Letter: Wolfenstein: A late convert



(which would probably be both fair and a good reminder) or setting up a private server for anyone who plays like this. Just an idea. However I think that the biggest problem is the pay to play - if Origin ditch this (and they can afford to) then the sales would rocket, and even the PK'ing wouldn't be such a big issue. If you have an Origin e-mail address then please tell me (if you can) so I can voice my opinion.

**Nick Hardy**  
Email

*Some interesting ideas there Nick. Origin aren't very forward about displaying email addresses for UO, but you might like to try [ozsupport@ea.com](mailto:ozsupport@ea.com) to let them know your thoughts. And while you're there, you might want to drop in a mention about a local server, or perhaps even sign the petition at [ultima.onthenet.com.au](http://ultima.onthenet.com.au). Good luck!*

## The Agony and the Ecstasy

No I'm not a masochist (not in the physical sense anyway), neither am I a drug addict. No, I'm talking about YOUR magazine. You gotta love it but you gotta hate it as well, you see. I'll explain; every time I read your magazine it evokes the most incredible and deeply felt emotions. Last issue I saw the review and screenshots of Unreal and I have to say it got me very excited. But only for a little while, because soon I realised I didn't have the hardware to run it at its best (or even at all). No 3Dfx, no Pentium 2... can you imagine the

feeling; the agony I have to suffer. Probably not, for you guys already have these things thanks to your job. Well I'm here to speak up for those masochists out there like me, people who buy this magazine knowing very well that they are going to be disappointed as soon as they look at the Hardware section or the requirements of most of the good games. I just think you should be aware of the psychological problems your magazine may be causing out there.

**John Gage**  
Email

*It's just a question of priorities, really. Do you want to eat and clothe yourself properly, or will you survive with ripped jeans and baked beans and toast for months at a time so that you can afford top of the range hardware? We know which one we choose...*

## Wolfenstein: A late convert

To you gaming gurus at PCPP, I read your review of Wolfenstein 3D in issue 25 and thought "Hey, haven't I got that somewhere?". So I looked around and found it, then installed it, and was amazed at how little disk space it took (a little over 2 megs), then loaded it up and was amazed at how smoothly it ran.

Then I started a new game and played it for around twenty minutes, and I was starting to see why this game was an alltime classic in many a gamer's book. I was amazed once again by the playability (it still puts a lot of new games

to shame). I can see now that there will be two types of people that will read this letter, the newbies who played it once and are laughing "Haha, what a crap game, just look at the graphics, and listen to the sound F/X, it must be crap!", and there will be the gamers who were addicted by the game, and remember happily the time they spent on their 286 playing it (after spending hours configuring their system to play it). To the first lot I have to say "Sure the graphics and sound sucks, but I dare you to play it with an open mind for an hour and I bet you will be saying not long after "Just one more floor before I go to work/school".

**Chris "General" Hughes**  
Email

## Consoles as ablutionary receptacles

Firstly, all congratulations are extended to those who make such a fine, unbiased mag every month. However, I must voice my concern on an issue which has recently been appearing in your pages. That is, the issue of console gaming.

Initially, the argument was held in a rational way, that befitting mature PC gamers. I refer of course to the open minded discussion of June 97, in which the place of PC's and consoles were put into perspective. However, lately it has degenerated into a lowly "pissing in the wind competition", which to be honest, is going nowhere and proving nothing.

I draw your attention to the letter "Console Consolation" (July 98) and the subsequent reply. To compare a console to a potty for a baby is surely as immature as the inane arguments held by ten year olds as to whose console is better. It is widely acknowledged that such arguments as Quake Vs Duke or TA Vs Starcraft are pointless wastes of time. As your very own Pete Sharpe puts it, "Remember, it's not whose game is the best, the aim is just to have fun playing them all."

Surely the same mode of thought can be applied to consoles and PC's: who cares what you're playing, as long as you have fun playing it. Honestly, who cares if a machine is faster or technically better? Games are what are important to us. You don't play systems, you play games! Our family owns a PC and a Sega Saturn. Obviously the PC is able to provide longer, more challenging and rewarding gaming experiences, but for what it does, the Saturn does it well (And may I add, relatively cheaply)! I think it's about time we all lost our attitudes and learnt to have some fun. Isn't that what it's all about?

**The Fonze**  
Melbourne

PS Or was it all in jest?

## A new Tall Poppy emerges

Voodoo2 SLI mode is a scam. People are paying for an entire card that they are not using. If what I understand is correct they are in reality only using the Z-buffer memory of the second card. Surely 3Dfx could have found a way to use the RAM on one card better. I believe that the next generation Power VR card does so. I will wait for it to appear rather than pay an extra \$500 for something that requires:

A 999mhz CPU to use, and Windows95; a 32-bit patch for a 16-bit GUI shell running on top of an 8-bit operating system written for a 4-bit processor by a 2-bit company who cannot stand 1 bit of competition.

**Mr Magoo**  
Email

*We would have given you letter of the month for that last sentence alone, but we have a sneaking suspicion that it's not original. Nice, though.*



# COMPETITIONS

## DUNE 2000

**D**ear old Westwood, they sure know how to keep us happy. Hopefully, after reading the review of Dune 2000 which starts on page 64 you'll be wanting a piece of the action. Great news! There's hope! Yes indeed, the wise folk at Virgin and Westwood have given us 6 copies of this re-worked classic. Because even we can't play 6 games simultaneously, we've reluctantly agreed to pass them on to our beloved readers in recognition of their taste, style and judgement.

**Q. What is the name of the Fremen weapon which is carved from the tooth of a sandworm?**



## TEAM APACHE

**M**ajor Ian gave it the nod, so it must be a great game. A little bit of arcade fun with just enough sim-seriousness to keep everyone happy, which makes us happy. Very happy.

Thanks solely to the tireless efforts of Shaz at GTI, we've scored the regulation 6 copies. If anyone's gaming life needs enrichment then this is the competition for you! Budda budda budda budda...



**Q. What's the name of the emergency procedure a pilot would use to land a helicopter that had lost engine power?**



## COMMANDOS

**W**ar may be hell, but without it the world of computer games would be pretty dull.

Commandos is a magnificent celebration of the horrors of war and we reckon it's tops.

So do Ozisoft, the Australian distributors. They were waiting outside the Next Media office late one afternoon as the team arrived for work in the PowerPlay staff limousine. Quicker than we could say "run the bastards over", they threw 6 copies through the window (spilling Ben's champagne, disrupting Gareth's slow-motion analysis of World Cup video footage and flattening Malcolm's Star Wars figurine nativity scene), then made good their escape before our personal bodyguards could exact revenge.

**Q. Which film featured the line: "I love the smell of napalm in the morning"?**



## CRICKET CAPTAIN

**A** cricket management sim! A cricket management sim! Hooray! Yay! And about bloody time! If this issue came a bit late, it's because the team downed tools and put into practise the cricket management expertise we knew we had all along. So, if like us, you've had your helpful letters of advice to Tubby Taylor rudely ignored, put your skills to work with this absolutely marvellous game. None of this would have been possible without the generosity of Mr Meat Of The Bat himself, Mr Van Raay at Metro Games.

**Q: Which ex-English captain from the late 70's has professed his love of wearing women's clothing, thereby creating endless jokes about his favourite fielding position of first slip?**

(Hint: He was an opener, one of the first players to pioneer the helmet as a protective device worn whilst batting, and is also a practicing psychotherapist).

## WHERE TO SEND

Write the answer, along with your name and address on the back of an envelope.

All entries close August 23, 1998

Entries to:

PC PowerPlay,

78 Renwick st.

Redfern NSW 2016

## Issue # 26 winners

**DIAMOND MONSTER VODOO II + SPEC OPS**

**Q. What is a "Full Metal Jacket"?**

A. A bullet in which a stronger metal, usually copper, is cast or plated around a lead core, completely encasing it. If the jacket exceeds 25% of the total bullet weight, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms classifies it as an armour-piercing bullet. The jacket helps retain its original shape, increasing the penetration depth when it strikes an object.

1st prize winners: (Diamond Monster 3DII-12Mb Voodoo 2 + Spec Ops game)

B. Walsh, Taringa QLD

E. Arandiga, Fremantle WA

Runner up winners: (Spec Ops game)

G. Crouch, Winnellie NT

M. Wynn, Paramatta NSW

D. Barker, Ferny Hills QLD

L. Bi, Karama NT

G. Puckridge, Boulder WA

O. McKern, Austinmer NSW

D. Rogers, Penrith NSW

M. Cartledge, Langwarrin VIC

## UNREAL

**Q. Which Comedy Company character popularised the term "unreal"?**

A. Kylie Mole

T. Paine, East Keilor VIC

M. Hampshire, Boronia VIC

R. Liberali, Aberfoyle Park SA

S & K Woolley, MacLeod VIC

P. Paterson, Singleton NSW

A. Webb, Springwood QLD

C. Pang, Redland Bay QLD

J. Marschall, Tanunda SA

M. Casey, Kanwal NSW

C. Maddern, Oaklands Park SA



# D/GENERATION

**Developer:** Robert Cook

**Year:** 1991

**Reqs:** 286/AT, 512K RAM, VGA supported

**D/lightful and D/lectable, D/Generation is revisited by D/Wildgoose.**

Anyone who owned a Spectrum or Commodore 64 way back when knows exactly why D/Generation was such a special game. Harking back to that early 80s era of gaming isometricity that saw the release of classics like Head Over Heels, Chimera and Knight Lore, D/Generation resurrected the term "arcade adventure" for the early 90s PC gamer.

You arrived via jetpack (as all future couriers will do) on the 80th floor of the Genoq building in Singapore, carrying a vital package for the famed geneticist Jean-Paul Derrida. Entering the first office it's clear that something was not quite right. Why is that security laser eyeing you so suspiciously? And why is the receptionist cowering under her desk? Moments later, after disabling the laser, you check the computer and discover an email from Derrida urgently requesting the delivery of his package.

Venturing cautiously through the next couple of rooms and speaking with the few remaining workers, it transpires that some experimental research had gone crazy and gained control of the building. The security system is no longer responding to foreign organisms, and has instead taken to blasting any human it sees. You suspect the package you hold might provide an answer, but first you've got to reach the 90th floor and find Derrida.

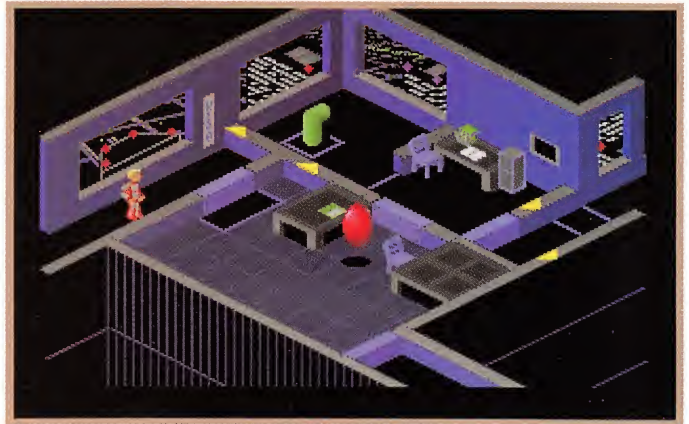
Thus the scene is set for a gripping and deviously-constructed arcade adventure. Detailed in appropriately futuristic clean VGA, each room was full of traps and puzzles. You may need to find a passcard to access certain doors, dodge the laser blasts from the security turrets, scamper past electrified floor plates and escort terrified employees to safety. Ingeniously, since each person you saved handed you an extra



At Powerplay HQ, Ben tries to remember where his office is, while Gareth continues his Giant Sucking Tube experiment. Malcolm is downstairs playing with his Star Wars toys

life, there was plenty of opportunity for some life or death decisions as you weighed up the risks associated with a rescue attempt.

But you need those extra lives because there are genetic mutations on the loose! A/Generations are fairly slow red eggs that bounce around trying to swallow you up, while the blue, pipe-shaped and far more dangerous B/Generations can leap swiftly and squash you before you've even had the chance to unholster your laser pistol. Making limited use of virtual reality technology are the C/Generations, disguising themselves as filing cabinets,



boxes, chairs, or most worryingly of all, even human beings. And the D/Generation? Heh, that's a surprise.

What made D/Generation so good was the way it gradually introduced new challenges and puzzles, constantly throwing up surprises yet still maintaining the perfect gameplay balance between brains and reflexes. There were only ten levels, but the difficulty curve was so finely-attuned that it made for a tough and long-lasting game. One minute you were frantically

dashing around a room trying to seal the vents while being chased by half a dozen A/Generations; the next you were scratching your head as to how best to utilise your time-freezing device in attempting to flip a switch guarded by bouncing laser barriers. Brilliant.

The ideas pioneered here live on today in the form of games such as Twinsen's Odyssey, Ecstatica and even Heart Of Darkness. For that reason alone, D/Generation, we salute you.

David Wildgoose





# Hot *It's gonna be a* Sierra Summer



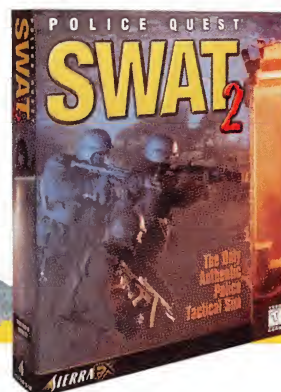
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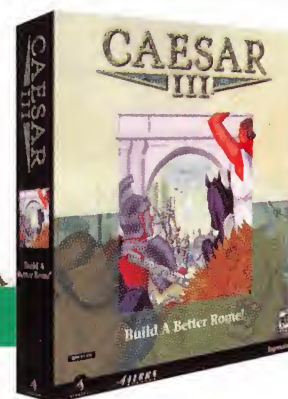


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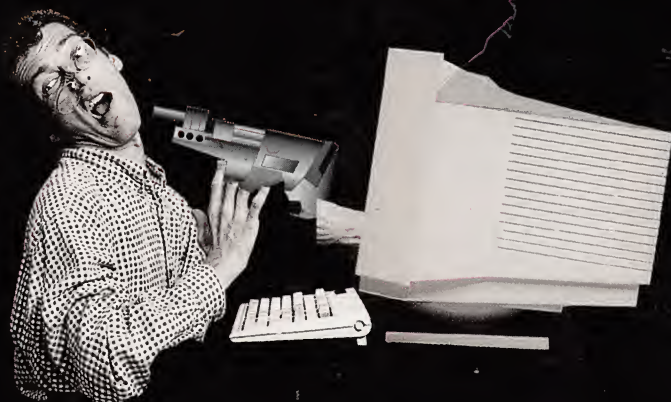
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